6. 50. 64

DISCOURSES

Upon several

[redacted]

BY

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[redacted]

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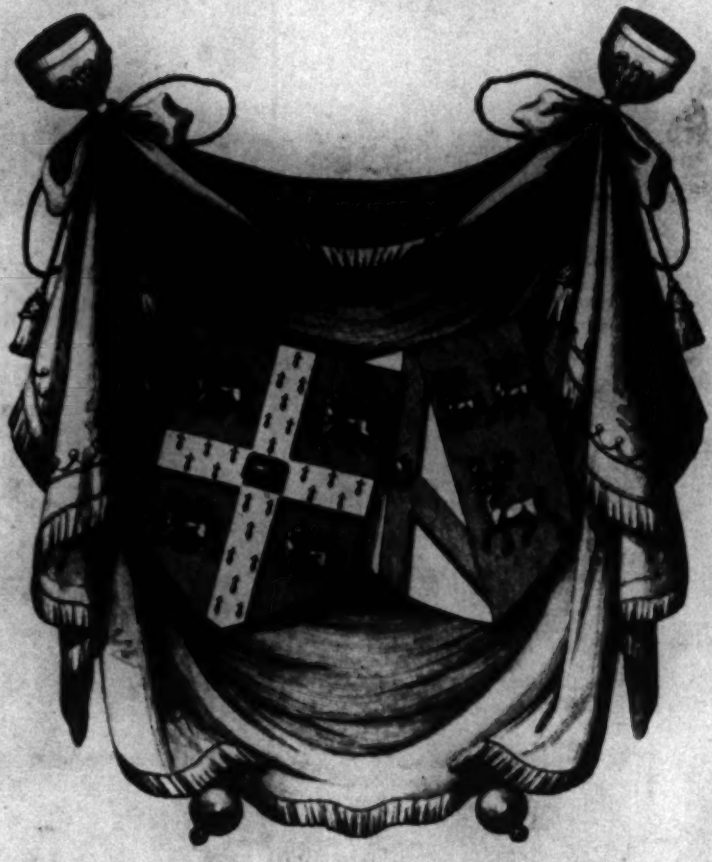
DISCOURSES



Academiæ Cantabrigiensis

262.6

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

AND

Right Reverend Father in God,

HENRY,

Lord Bishop of LONDON,

DEAN of the CHAPEL,

And one of His Majesty's most Honourable Privy Council.

My most Honour'd Lord and Patron,

THE great Blessings which I enjoy under the happy Influence of your Lordship's Favour, oblige me with all due Humility to lay these Discourses at your Lordship's Feet: not

as

as though I can be so vainly arrogant, as to imagine they any ways deserve your Perusal or Acceptance, but purely as an Acknowledgment of your Lordship's Goodness, and an hearty, tho' poor, Expression of my unfeigned Gratitude. Most of them have been compil'd [illegible] your Lordship vouchsaf'd to receive me under your Wings, and therefore it may be expected, that they approve themselves in some measure worthy of so noble a Patronage. This (I confess) I have ambitiously endeavour'd effectually to accomplish; But if I fall short of so Great an Enterprise, I humbly hope for Pardon from your Lordship's Candour, which the World has so long and so deservedly admir'd. I am,

[illegible] my most honoured Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most Humble and Grateful,

and Dutiful Servant,

T. G.

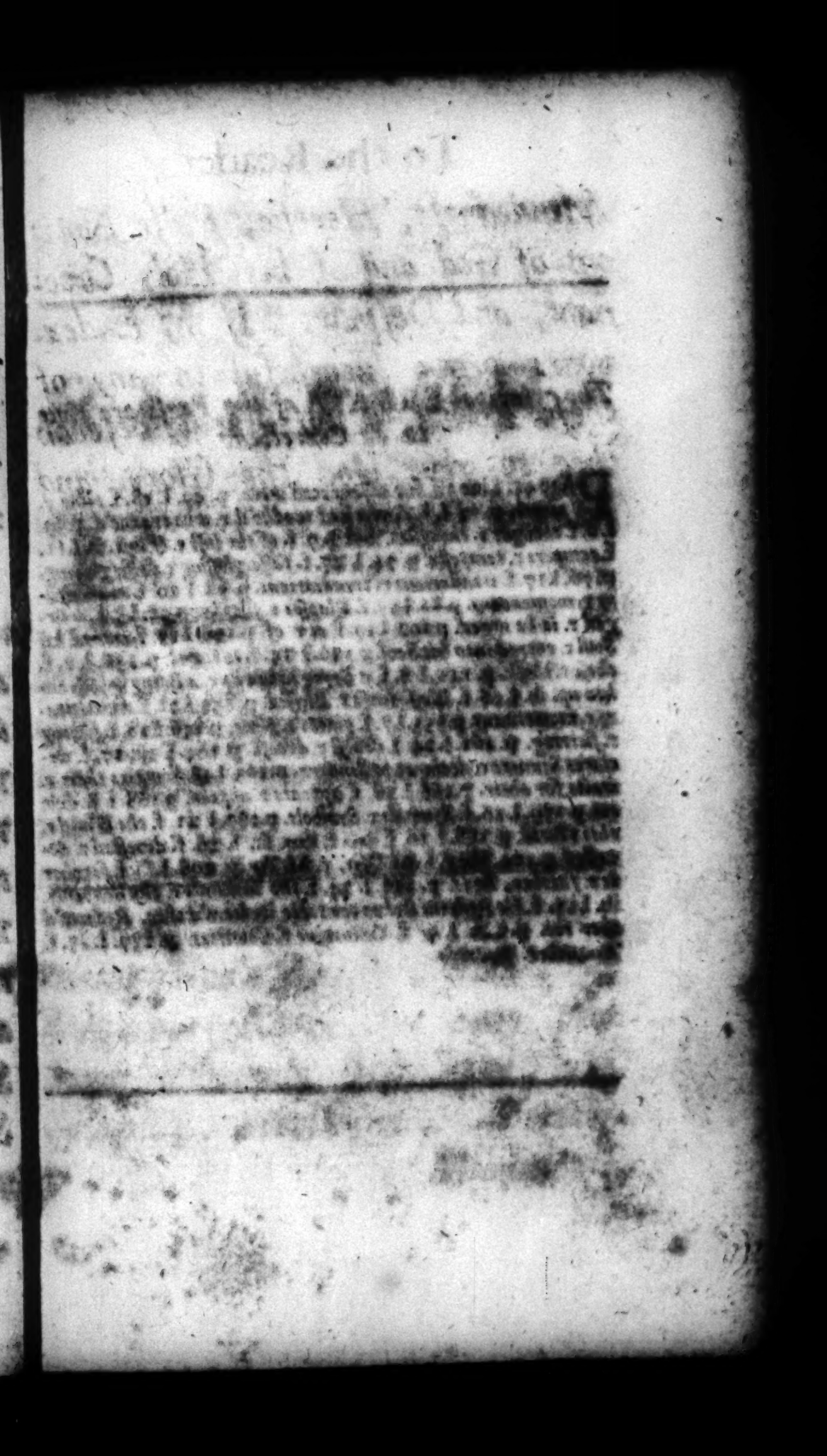
TO THE
READER.

'TIS the indispensable Duty of every Faithful Christian, to endeavour (as far as he is able) the growing Distempers of the Age he lives in. This I have, with the greatest Sincerity, tho' not with the greatest Abilities, attempted in the following Discourses; which are design'd to preserve thee, through God's Blessing, from those dangerous Rocks, so many poor Souls unhappily split upon, viz. Schism, Scepticism, Worldly-Mindedness,

To the Reader.

Blindedness, Heresie, False Notions of God and of his Holy Covenant, and Despair. If my Endeavours prove successful in any of these Points, I instantly beseech thee to give God the Glory, and Mostly Prayers.

Farewel.



The principal ERRATA *of the Press are thus to be Corrected.*

[illegible] 42. Line 18. for adore read more. p. 49. l. 18. f. rises r. [illegible] p. 58. l. 6. f. [illegible] r. [illegible] p. 69. [illegible] r. [illegible] p. 70. l. 27. f. [illegible] r. [illegible] p. 76. l. 17. f. [illegible] r. [illegible] p. 93. l. 20. f. [illegible] p. 102. [illegible] p. 120. l. 5. f. Kingdom r. [illegible] p. 126. l. 6. f. [illegible] r. [illegible] p. 128. l. 27. f. [illegible] p. 130. l. 29. f. [illegible] p. 136. l. 6. f. [illegible] r. [illegible] p. 138. l. 7. f. [illegible] r. [illegible] p. 142. l. 18. f. [illegible] r. [illegible] p. 164. l. 18. 27. f. [illegible] p. 165. l. 18. f. [illegible] r. [illegible] p. 168. l. 18. f. [illegible] r. [illegible] p. 169. l. 26. f. [illegible] r. [illegible] p. 170. l. 6. f. [illegible] r. [illegible] p. 171. l. 6. f. [illegible] r. [illegible] p. 172. l. 6. f. [illegible] r. [illegible] p. 173. l. 6. f. [illegible] r. [illegible] p. 174. l. 6. f. [illegible] r. [illegible] p.

Ser. I.

1 KINGS xviii. 21.

How long halt ye between two Opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.

THese Words are a just Expostulation of a Prophet of the Lord with the rebellious and stiff-necked Sons of *Jacob* and *Israel*. God had so fully reveal'd himself unto them, and so plainly chalk'd out the Way which they should walk in, that 'twas absolutely impossible they should be either ignorant of the one, or mistaken in the other, without a wilful Perverseness and the most studied Prevarication. He made himself known even by his name *Jehovah* to their Fathers in *Egypt*, and assur'd them, by many miraculous or Supernatural Acts of Vengeance upon the Heads of their Enemies, that He who is the Author of Nature, the Controller of Second Causes, and the Soveraign

Commander of all the World, vouchsaf'd, in a most peculiar manner, to become their God. He brought them out of that Land of their Captivity, that House of their Bondage, with a mighty hand and stretched-out Arm: marching himself at the Head of their Armies in a Pillar of Cloud by Day, and a Pillar of Fire by Night. He afterwards most solemnly proclaim'd himself to them before the glorious Battalions of attending Angels upon Mount *Sinai*: even entring into a Covenant with his People; and, as their Lord and King, giving them Ordinances, Laws, and Statutes, for the Regulation and Government of their Publick and Private Concerns, their Lives and Polity. In short, He made *Israel* alone, of all the Nations of the Earth, his First-born; array'd him with the Excellency of Dignity, and the Excellency of Power; caus'd all his Brethren to bow down before him, and his name to be a Blessing and a Praise in all the Earth.

And yet so perverse and untoward was the Disposition of this People, so monstrously disingenuous and ungrateful their Returns, that they never seriously considered what he had done, the wonderful Mercies he daily shew'd to them; but always turn'd their Backs, and fell away like

like their Forefathers, ſtarting aſide like a broken Bow. Tho' the Sons of *Levi* throughout all their Tribes inſtructed them continually in the Law of the Lord, and Prophets were ſent in every Generation to continue them in the Knowledge and Service of their God; nay, tho' God, to prevent their ſeeking after lying Divinations, was pleas'd, in a moſt extraordinary manner, to reſide himſelf amongſt them, and to be always ready, by his Urim and Thummim, to anſwer and direct them in all momentous Emergencies; yet, they perpetually affronted him to his very Face, and provok'd him to Jealouſie by their ſhameleſs Backſlidings. They forſook God their Saviour, and lightly eſteem'd the Rock of their Salvation; not only rejecting him from being their King when he reign'd with the tender Mercies and Indulgencies of a Father; but alſo diminiſhing him even in his Godhead, by ſetting up other Lords beſides him to Rule over them. No ſooner did the Government * introduce or † tolerate the Superſtitions of ſtrange Worſhip, but they diſplay'd at large the Levity and Baſeneſs of their Temper; either totally falling off from the God of their Fathers, and devoting themſelves wholly to the Abominations of their Neighbours, or ſo

* 1 Kings 12. 30.
† 2 Kings 12. 3. Ch. 12. 4.

crilegiouſly dividing between Him and Them, between the Lame and the Blind, and the Almighty God. The Temple of the Lord ſhall not be ſhut up nor broken down, if the Houſes of Idols may alſo ſtand open and be frequented; nor the Prieſts of the Living God be moleſted in their Office, provided the ſame Liberty be allow'd to the Worſhippers of *Dæmons*. In a word, They'll be contented to Worſhip ſometimes before the Ark of the Lord, if at others they may as religiouſly bow themſelves in the Houſe of *Rimmon*; and devoutly ſing Praiſes to the God of Heaven, may they joyn likewiſe in the Adorations and Services of *Baal*.

This lukewarm, indifferent, trimming Behaviour, this deſultory, faithleſs, ungodly Temper being juſtly reprov'd and condemn'd by the Prophets, was ſo far from returning to a due ſtability in the ways of Godlineſs, that it ran out into the violent, outrageous Extreams of Bigotry and Superſtition: not contenting it ſelf any longer with the Schiſmatical Erection of Altars againſt Altars, but under the ſpecious Colours of ancient Sophiſtry, the plauſible Pretences of a more excellent way of Worſhip, proceeding even to throw down all the Altars of God in the Land, to revile, perſecute,

perſecute, and ſlaughter his Servants, and to advance and cheriſh the Authors of Schiſm, the Incendiaries of Church and State, and the Patriots of their Irreligion, the Prophets of *Baal* only. As tho' to ſerve God in his own way was an unreaſonable Impoſition upon the Liberty of Conſcience, and the Patriarchs and Prophets were all Idiots and Mad-men, becauſe they and their Families would ſerve the Lord.

This revolting, light, unſtable People, the Prophet *Elijah* (I ſay) expoſtulates with in the Text; plainly affirming, that 'tis altogether inconſiſtent with the Nature of true Piety to halt between two Opinions, or (as *Grotius* explains it) to alternate and vary in the Objects of their Devotion, ſometimes Worſhipping God, and ſometimes *Baal*; it being their indiſpenſible Duty, once for all, to ſatisfie themſelves throughly which of theſe two is God, and then for ever to renounce the one, and to fix and centre in the Service of the other. *How long* (ſays he) *halt ye between two Opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him; but if* Baal, *then follow him.*

How ſeaſonably we may, with this Expoſtulation in our Mouth, addreſs our ſelves to the Preſent Age, I need not inform you. Every Man, that looks carefully about him,

and seriously considers the present Posture of Affairs, sees 'tis absolutely necessary. The Life and Spirit of Religion seem to be banish'd out of our Streets; and nothing but Scepticism and Incredulity, Superstition and Profaneness, Hypocrisie and Dissimulation, to dwell in our Land. To promote their own Ends, or the Interest of a Party, Men profess themselves Sons of the Establish'd Church, frequent her Assemblies, conform to her Injunctions, and appear zealous and devout in her holy Offices. But all this while they do but flatter her with their Mouth, and dissemble with her in their Tongue; for their Heart is so far from being whole with her, that they detest her Constitution, repine at her Establishment, and constantly strike in with her deadly Enemies, endeavouring by all means possible to supplant and overthrow her. They talk perpetually of the Loveliness of Friendship, and wish that our *Jerusalem* might at length be at Peace and Unity within her self: and yet at the same time they think it no Sin to frequent unlawful Assemblies; tho' they thereby widen her Breaches, strengthen the Hands of her Enemies, confirm their Prejudices, and become the Abetters and Promoters of an execrable Schism. In a word, They are exactly of the

the same Temper and Complexion with the upbraided People in the Text, standing ready, as the Tide of their Interest turns, to revolt from God to his Rival, from Truth to Falshood, from Union to Schism, from the Church to a Conventicle.

Now this indifferent Temper they ordinarily stile Moderation; which is a Vertue truly excellent and laudable in it self, but the least understood by these Men of any in the Circle. That only obliges Men to manage their Disputes, and to assert their Principles, of whose Truth they are fully perswaded, with Temper: but This allows them to have no Principles at all, or at least to act as if they had none; and consequently is so far from answering its Character, that 'tis a very indecent and unreasonable thing, odious and abominable in the Sight of God and Good Men, most impious in its Nature, and pernicious in its Consequences. Which will evidently appear from these three Considerations:

I. That it plainly demonstrates, that Men are acted by no fix'd and steddy Principles, but are of vagrant and loose Minds, unresolv'd in their Judgments, unfixed in the Faith, and in truth of very little or no Religion at all.

II. That it expoſeth every particular Perſon to all the various and phantaſtick Spirits of Error and Deluſion. And,

III. The whole Community to Ruin and Deſtruction.

1. This indifferent Temper is both impious in its Nature, and alſo pernicious in its Conſequences, becauſe it plainly demonſtrates that Men are acted by no fix'd and ſteddy Principles, but are of vagrant and looſe Minds, unreſolv'd in their Judgments, unſetled in the Faith, and in truth of very little or no Religion at all. *Origen* tells *Celſus*, that ſuch is the Nature and Excellency of Chriſtianity, that it utterly ſtript and deveſted Mankind of all their hereditary and moſt prevailing Immoralities: the *Scythian* thereby becoming mild and courteous, the *Perſian* chaſt and continent, the *Roman* humble and condeſcending, and the *Greek* veracious and modeſt. But had the *Greek*, together with the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, ſtill retain'd his Vanity and Falſneſs, the *Roman* his Pride and Haughtineſs, the *Perſian* his Softneſs and Incontinence, and the *Scythian* his Fierceneſs and Inhumanity: Had (I ſay) theſe Nations, thus divided between the Chriſtian Vertues

and

and their Pagan Vices, Chriſt and their Idols, God and their Luſts, the Father had never glory'd in their Acceſſion to the Church, but moſt deſervedly excluded them from the Denomination of true Believers. For how can he ſincerely Believe God to be the Beſt of Beings, who will not Love and Serve him with his whole Heart? or Chriſt to be his only Saviour, who ſhares his Affections between Him and *Belial*? How can he believe Chriſtianity to be a truly divine and heavenly Inſtituti- who affects it with Lukewarmneſs, Indifferency, or Moderation? or how can he contend earneſtly for the Faith once deliver'd to the Saints, who ſtill fluctuates and wavers between two Opinions? The Indifferency of his Temper, abundantly betrays the Incredulity of his Heart; and having no ſettled Principles, he is in danger (like a Ship without Ballaſt) to be over-ſet with every Wind of Deluſion and Impoſture. The Second Thing to be conſidered.

2. This indifferent Temper is both impious in its Nature, and alſo pernicious in its Conſequences, becauſe it expoſeth every particular Perſon to all the various and phantaſtick Spirits of Error and Deluſion: Were Men once well grounded in the Principles of their Religion, and able to give

give a Reaſon for their profeſſion of the Faith; did they not take up their Religion upon Truſt, and (like the *Turks* and *Pagans*) only therefore embrace it, becauſe conſonant to the Belief and Practice of their Progenitors; they would be wonderfully delighted in the Statutes of the Lord, and walk without Offence in the Path of his Commandments. The multifarious Contrivances of the Enemy, and the Deceiver, would be eaſily detected and unravell'd by their Reaſon; which, aſſiſted by the unerring Records of Divine Revelation, would break through all the Fogs and Vapours of Deceit; with the Strength and Brightneſs of the faithful Witneſs in Heaven. But when the Mind lies uncultivated, and devoid of true Principles, and is not fram'd into a Right Underſtanding and Judgment of Divine Things; when Men cannot rationally account for any, and therefore are indifferently inclin'd to all the ways of Worſhip, the Tempter will ſoon appear in the beautiful Form of an Angel of Light; and under that diſguiſe, unhappily decoy them into the endleſs Mazes and Labyrinths of Error. The Shadow of Religion, to their unskilful Judgments, will ſoon be effectually recommended for the Subſtance; and the External, fallacious, ſuperficial Signs,

Signs, be miſtaken for the Interiour and Real Acts of Devotion. A judicious, ſafe, well-grounded Piety, will be renounc'd for the wild irrational Dictates of Melancholy and Enthuſiaſm; and one phantaſtical, ſenſeleſs, unintelligible Interpreter of the Divine Oracles, be preferr'd before ten Men, that can render a Reaſon. In a word, They'll be induc'd either totally to reject the Word of God for their own pretended Inſpirations; the undefiled Law of the Moſt High, for the ſoul, impure Suggeſtions of their ungodly Spirits; or at leaſt, to mingle with the Waters of Life, the putrid Streams that flow from their own Ciſterns. This I need not prove from the Records of Antiquity: our own Nation being a ſad Demonſtration of it at this day. For how are ſome of our Brethren, tho' they enjoy the moſt bleſſed Opportunities of a right Information, toſt to and fro (like fooliſh Children) with every Wind of ſtrange Doctrine? How are they led away by every Impoſtor from the ſimplicity of the Goſpel? and ſpoil'd and plunder'd of their Chriſtian Armour by the falſe Prophets, that are gone out into the World? Alas! were it not for the decent and orderly, the wiſe and prudent, the beautiful and heavenly Conſtitution of our Eſtabliſh'd Church, This Land, which

which was not long ſince the Glory of all Lands, would really be nothing elſe, but a Spiritual *Bedlam*: all the various kinds of Spiritual Phrenzy and Madneſs having entred into it, and uncomfortably filling its mournful Habitations with their outragious Blaſphemies and unintelligible Jargon. No Notion ſo abſurd and ridiculous, no Doctrine ſo monſtrous and paradoxical, no Principles ſo wicked and atheiſtical, but what find ſome dreaming Prophet amongſt us to eſpouſe and aſſert them; and that Dreamer, tho' he has neither Piety nor Learning, nothing, but the loathſome deteſtable Verniſh of Hypocriſie and Diſſimulation, to diſtinguiſh him from his Neighbours; has, notwithſtanding, his Followers, Abetters, and Admirers. Mens indifferency in the Affairs of Religion unfortunately leads them to thoſe unlawful Aſſemblies, where their unſtable and treacherous Hearts are eaſily taken captive by the Spirit of Deluſion; ſo that under the pretence of trying all things, they really let go all, that is good; from Neuters, or indifferent and lukewarm Friends, commencing virulent, irreconcilable Enemies to the Preachers of ſound Doctrine. To ſuch Deluſions and Impoſtures (I ſay) are Men unhappily expoſed by their unaccountable Indifferency

rency in the Affairs of Religion. But, alas! this is not all; For,

3. This indifferent Temper not only expoſeth particular Perſons to the various and phantaſtick Spirits of Error and Deluſion, but the whole Community likewiſe to Ruin and Deſtruction. A Kingdom divided againſt it ſelf (ſays our * Lord) cannot ſtand; and by theſe means this Nation ſtands divided into ſeveral Factions and Parties, who with all imaginable Rancor and Bitterneſs endeavour to devour and prey upon one another. Our Enemies then may ſave themſelves the danger of venturing their Necks among us. Let them have but Patience, and we ſhall do their work for them. What their Plots and Cabals, their Fire and Faggots, their Gun-powder and Treaſon could never effect, our Enmities and Diviſions, our Fewds and Animoſities, our Striſes and Seditions will certainly bring to paſs. Theſe diſunite and weaken our Forces in the day of Battel. Theſe divide our Councils and evacuate the wiſe Sanctions and Decrees of our Synods. Theſe pull down our Fortreſſes, our Walls, and Bulwarks, and expoſe us naked and defenceleſs to the Incurſions of the Common Enemy. Tho' therefore we never ſo ſolemnly proteſt againſt the Innovations of Popery,

* Mar. 3. 24.

and

and zealouſly declare our Abhorrence and Deteſtation of its impious Doctrines, unleſs we endeavour, by all lawful and warrantable means to cement theſe Differences, we our ſelves are the Men who maintain its Intereſt here, and make way for its unhappy Re-admiſſion into the Land. May the Good Lord of Heaven and Earth then open all our Eyes, and cauſe us to know the Things which belong unto our Peace, before our Sins provoke him to hide them finally from our Eyes.

And thus you have ſeen, how much this indifferent Temper falls ſhort of the Character ſome Men unskilfully put upon it. That 'tis ſo far from being ally'd to that truly excellent and laudable Vertue, Moderation, that 'tis a very indecent and unreaſonable thing; odious and abominable in the ſight of God and Good Men; moſt impious in its Nature, and pernicious in its Conſequences. That it plainly demonſtrates, that Men are acted by no fix'd and ſteddy Principles, but are of vagrant and looſe Minds, unreſolv'd in their Judgments, unſetled in the Faith, and in truth of very little or no Religion at all. That it not only expoſeth particular Perſons to the various and phantaſtick Spirits of Error and Deluſion, but the whole Community likewiſe to Ruin and Deſtruction. Let

Let me then intreat you, my Brethren, for the Credit and Reputation of our Common Chriſtianity; for the Honour of our moſt Beautiful, Prudent, and Pious Mother, the Church of *England*; for the Preſervation, Safety, and Happineſs of theſe Kingdoms; as you love your God, your Religion, your Country, your own Souls; to be ſtedfaſt and immovable in the Profeſſion of the Faith, not walking deceitfully and in Maſquerade, as (you ſee) the manner of ſome is, nor baſely proſtituting your Conſciences by an hypocritical, prevaricating Behaviour to your Secular Intereſt; but, in ſpight of all the Terrors and Allurements of the World, ſerving God with a faithful and true heart, with Uprightneſs and Sincerity, all the days of your Life. And to this End, give me leave to adviſe theſe few things.

1. That you call no Man Maſter upon Earth; *i. e.* That you never have any Man's Learning or Piety in ſuch Veneration, as to receive all he ſays for an Oracle, for an infallible Rule of your Faith and Manners; but that you always remember, that you have a great Maſter in Heaven, who has given you a ſure and certain Rule to walk by, and who expects your Obedience without any Reſerve. This Caution

was

Mat. 23. was given by our Lord himſelf to his Diſciples; and it truly ſavours of the excellent Wiſdom and Providence of its Author. For the Proſelites of the *Phariſees* were poſſeſt with ſuch a Perſwaſion of the great Sanctity and unparallell'd Learning of their Maſters, that they entirely reſign'd themſelves up to their Conduct and Guidance, becoming thereby, both in Notion and Practice, twofold more the Children of Hell than themſelves; and thoſe famous Conteſts between the *Thomiſts* and *Scotiſts* and other Diſputants in the Church of *Rome*, are wholly to be aſcrib'd to the over-weening Opinion which they all pertinaciouſly retain for their own Patriarchs. Nay, the Firſt Sin that crept into the World, came this way: for I conceive, with a great and learned * Author of our own, that 'twas the too great Opinion which the Woman entertain'd of the Wiſdom of the Serpent, that induc'd her firſt to liſten to, and then to comply with his Suggeſtions; and I doubt not but that the Apoſtate Spirits themſelves, might ſtill have kept their Heavenly Habitations, had not their deluded Fancies doubled the Glory of that Son of the Morning, *Lucifer*. In ſhort, † 'Tis the ſuperſtitious Reverence and unaccountable Honour, which the School-

* *Joſeph Mede.* Book 1. Diſc. xl.

† *Vid. Hen. Dodwell Ep. 2. Sect. 5. & Steph. Penton. Appar. Spec. ad Theol. par. 1. cap. 6.*

Schoolmen pay to Authority, that betrays them into many unhappy Errors, as well in their Theological as Philoſophical Speculations. Honour Men then only as Men. Whatever their Natural or Acquir'd Excellencies may be, they are all ſubject to Error. Try all their Doctrines therefore, whether they be of God; and believe nothing, tho' enforc'd with the greateſt Human Authority, unleſs upon due Examination you find it conſonant to Scripture and Reaſon. And ſo I come to the

2. Thing adviſable; which is, That you would try all Things, and not take up your Religion upon Truſt, upon the Authority and Recommendation of your Natural, Civil, or Spiritual Fathers; but, that you would let it be (what it ought to be) a Rational Service the Reſult of your own mature impartial, and well-weigh'd Conſiderations. And what in this I ſay unto you, I would ſay more particularly to our Diſſenting Brethren. They are equally guilty with the *Romaniſts* in this Point; depending too ſecurely upon the Authority, and acquieſcing in the Reports and Repreſentations of their Leaders. I would therefore (I ſay) moſt earneſtly intreat them, as they will anſwer it at the Dreadful Day of Judgment, when every Man muſt ſtand

or fall by his own Conſcience, to judge for themſelves; and fairly and ingenuouſly, ſeverely and impartially, to weigh and conſider the Doctrine and Diſcipline, the Principles and Order, of our Eſtabliſh'd Church. Could we thus far prevail; I am verily perſuaded, that thoſe Hearts and Paſſions which now ſo tumultuouſly boil in ſome Mens Bowels againſt her, would all evaporate and expire; and we ſhould ſoon walk together into the Houſe of God as Friends. Which I therefore believe, becauſe 'tis well known, that many of her Adverſaries have been perfectly reconcil'd to her upon leſſer Motives: only by venturing to conſult their own Senſes, and calmly and ſedately to look into her Devotions. The Church did then to their unbiaſs'd Judgments moſt clearly unfold her raviſhing Beauty and Brightneſs, and their wondring Eyes ſaw and confeſs'd her Parts and comely Proportions. She appear'd fair as *Tirzah*, comely as *Jeruſalem*, and (quite contrary to their Expectations) terrible to *Enthuſiaſm* and *Popery* too, as an Army with Banners. I would therefore (I ſay again) moſt earneſtly intreat theſe Perſons to lay aſide their Prejudices, and with their own Eyes ſeriouſly to look into and examine her Conſtitution. If ſhe injoyns any thing that's

that's inconſiſtent with any Law of Reaſon, any Law or Rule of the Goſpel, any Article of our Faith, any part of Chriſtian Worſhip, or the Practice of the Univerſal Church in the Firſt and Pureſt Ages; Reaſon would that we ſhould bear with their Separation. But if her Doctrine be truly conſonant to the Word of God: If her Diſcipline ſerves directly to the Beating down the Strong-holds of Sin, and to the Promotion of Piety and a Good Life: If her Devotions are ſubſtantially pious and prudent, ſerious and comprehenſive, ſignificant and intelligible, and Every way moſt wiſely and divinely compos'd: If her Ceremonies are not only few in Number, but likewiſe decent, grave, ſignificant, and edifying in their Nature and Uſe: In a word, If ſhe does all things (according to the Apoſtolical Injunction) Decently, and in order, after the Primitive Patterns, according to the beſt meaſures of Human Wiſdom. If (I ſay) ſhe does all this, (and all this 'twill be demonſtratively evident to every impartial Enquirer, that ſhe does) then I cannot but affirm, that their Separation from us, in point of Conſcience, is altogether unwarrantable, impious, ſchiſmatical. But becauſe they are taught to be deaf to our Apologies and with an unmanly, blind, implicit Faith,

to believe us Apoſtates to Popery and Innovation. I would (I ſay) moſt earneſtly beſeech them to uſe their own Senſes; and to read, to think, and to judge at laſt for themſelves. That they would not paſs Sentence upon us, before they know us; nor judge of the Doctrine or Diſcipline of our Church by the Prejudices of their Education, or the diſingenuous, illaudable Reports of their Partial Leaders; but wholly and entirely by the word of God, the ſure, infallible Rule of the Holy-Scriptures. A Method, which in the next place I likewiſe moſt heartily adviſe you to.

3. Then, Read the Scriptures. This is the Duty of Every Chriſtian, requir'd and injoyn'd by the Saviour of our Souls, the Lord Chriſt Jeſus. *Search the Scriptures*, (ſays * he) *for in them ye have Eternal Life, and they are they which teſtifie of me.* And indeed, 'twas by theſe that our Lord himſelf repell'd the impudent Aſſaults and crafty Inſinuations of the Devil: that his Apoſtles both planted and water'd his Church: and that the pious Fathers and Councils baffled the Hereſies, and put to Silence the Ignorance of fooliſh Men. Let as many of us therefore, as can diſtinguiſh between Good and Evil; Young Men and Maidens Old Men and even Children, be con-

* Joh. 5. 39.

converſant in theſe Writings. They are that Rule, which, if duly attended to, will not ſuffer us to err, being not (like the Oracles of *Dæmons*) wrapt up in intricate, obſcure, ambiguous Expreſſions, but plain and eaſie to the meaneſt Underſtanding. Plain and eaſie (I ſay) in all things neceſſary to Salvation; the *Credenda* as well as the *Agenda* of our Religion; the things which demand our Faith, as well as thoſe, that call for our Practice, in many places diſplaying themſelves in ſuch Capital Letters, that he who runs may read them.

There are indeed in theſe Writings δυσνόητά τινα, ſome obſcure Places, and hard to be underſtood. But theſe (I conceive) are not neceſſary to be underſtood; for if they were, our Heavenly Father had undoubtedly ſo deliver'd them, that by his Bleſſing upon our honeſt Labour and Study, we ſhould at length certainly, clearly, and diſtinctly underſtand them. But ſince (as I humbly conceive) they are not ſo deliver'd, but after all our Pains and Induſtry lie ſecurely envelop'd with their own Darkneſs, we may ſafely conclude from the Goodneſs of our Maker, that they are not neceſſary to be underſtood. Nay, I verily believe, that ſuch is the nature of ſome of theſe Places, eſpecially of ſome in

St. *John's Revelations*, that 'tis prodigious Impertinence and unpardonable Vanity, to determine peremptorily upon them. They ſeem to be Prophecies, which belong not to us, but to our Children; Not to the Preſent, but Future Ages of the Church, when they will all clear up, and apparently unfold themſelves in their utmoſt Completion. Then at laſt will the Clouds all vaniſh and diſappear, and theſe places ſhine forth with untainted Luſtre and Brightneſs. Then will the Church behold, with Joy and Tranſport, the manifold Wiſdom of God, which for wiſe and great Ends is hid from theſe Ages and Generations; and which therefore, 'tis no ways neceſſary we ſhould underſtand.

Let others then (if they dare venture) curiouſly pry into theſe Recondite Points; Let them continually rack and torture their Brains in the fruitleſs ſearch after theſe hidden Myſteries, till their γνῶσις ψευδώνυμος, Knowledge falſly ſo call'd, ſo ſwell and puff them up, that they either wreſt them to their own Perdition, over-looking the plain, ſelf-evident places, and by unwarrantable, contradictory expoſitions of the obſcure, bringing in damnable Hereſies and Corruptions into the Church; or (of all which this preſent Age is abundant proof)

they

they cauſe their own Heads to grow vertiginous, and irrecoverably fall into the lamentable ſtate of Delirancy and Madneſs. But let us be ſober and wiſe unto Salvation, not impertinently prying into things beyond our reach; but ſtudying the things which make for Peace, and things whereby we may edifie one another. Let us meditate in the Law of the Lord, not to gratifie our Curioſity, but to meliorate our Lives: not to encourage and patronize Diviſions and Schiſm, but to preſerve Union and Concord in the Church of God; Not to be litigious, noiſy, and impertinent; but holy and unblameable in all manner of Converſation. The fourth and laſt thing to be adviſed,

4. Study to live well, or in all the Accidents and Emergencies of your Lives to keep a Conſcience void of Offence towards God and towards Man. This is the beſt and ſureſt way to preſerve your ſelves pure from all manner of Contagion: For I can never entertain ſuch unworthy Thoughts of my Bleſſed Maker, as to think he will ſuffer an ingenuous Soul, who makes it her Buſineſs ſincerely to ſearch after Truth, and diligently to walk in the old Paths, ever to die in any Damnable Error. And if I am not unpardonably miſtaken, the Sacred Oracles do abundantly confirm me in this

* Pſal. 119. ver. 165. † Ver. 130. ‖ Ver. 104. ** Joh. 7. 17. † 2 Tim. 1. 19, 20.

Perſuaſion. *Great peace*, ſays the * Pſalmiſt, *have they that love thy Law, and nothing ſhall offend them*: and † again, *When thy word goeth forth, it giveth light and underſtanding unto the ſimple*: and ‖ again, *Thro' thy Commandments I get underſtanding, therefore I hate all evil ways.* And our ** Lord himſelf, *If any man will do his will, he ſhall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God.* And as I am perſuaded, that 'tis abſolutely impoſſible for a devout, well-meaning, ſincere, and pious Soul ever to die in any damnable Error; ſo, on the other hand, I conceive it almoſt as impoſſible for a Man, who has caſt off all Care of his Conſcience, to keep his Faith long pure and undefil'd. † St. *Paul* tells us of *Hymeneus* and *Alexander*, that having put away their Conſcience, they miſerably made Shipwrack of their Faith: And 'tis obſervable of the Learned *Jews*, that when about three or fourſcore Years before the Nativity of Chriſt they began to relax their Diſcipline, and to diſſolve into the looſe and wanton Cuſtoms of their neighbouring Orientals, they immediately betook themſelves likewiſe to transform their Faith; reſolving the Commandments of God into their own Inventions, and making his Word of none effect through their upſtart Traditions.

tions. You see they first defil'd their Conscience, and then their Faith.

May then the God of all Grace, who hath call'd us unto his Eternal Glory by Christ Jesus, keep us stedfast in the Faith once deliver'd to the Saints; and to that End stablish, strengthen, settle us in every good Word and Work. To Him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever. Amen. Amen.

W

1 PET.

Ser. 2.

1 PET. Ch. v. Ver. 8.

Your Adversary the Devil, as a Roaring Lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

WHether that ancient Opinion of the Heathens *de invidiâ Dæmonis* had its Rise only from those grand Cheats and Impostures which the more inquisitive and designing Heads amongst them observ'd to be impos'd upon the World, not only in their more common and ordinary ways of divination, but likewise by the most celebrated Oracles themselves, as * *Jamblichus* argues; or rather, as the Learned † *Casaubon* contends, borrow'd its Original from the History of the Fall of Man, which the several Nations are suppos'd to have receiv'd by Tradition from the Sons of *Noah*, and *Plato* more particularly from some Learned *Jews* in *Egypt*; I shall not take upon me to determine: My pre-

* *De Myst. Ægypt.*
† *Orig. of Temp.* Ed.

sent

ſent Scope and Deſign being only to ſhew;

1. That in the Confeſſion of All, as well Heathens as Chriſtians, there are a ſort of wicked and malignant *Daemons*, which are Enemies to mankind. Expreſs'd in theſe Words of my Text, *The Devil, your Adverſary.*

2. That theſe wicked and malignant *Daemons* are permitted to wander up and down in the Earth. Expreſs'd in theſe Words, *The Devil, your Adverſary, walketh about.*

3. To lay open, with what inexpreſſible Pains and various Stratagems they ſeek to ruine Men, and with what Cruelty they treat them, when they are once got into their hands. Expreſs'd in theſe words, *As a roaring Lion walketh about, ſeeking whom he may devour.*

4. Though they have Malice enough to deſtroy us all, yet that they cannot do us the leaſt Miſchief, unleſs God permits them. Expreſs'd in theſe Words, *Seeking whom he may devour*; us, may be permitted to devour.

1: In the Confeſſion of All, as well Heathens as Chriſtians, there are a ſort of wicked and malignant *Daemons*, which are Enemies to mankind. Should we [illegible] Wings of the Morning and travel [illegible] the

the Nations of the Earth, we should find but very few among the Reputed Sages of the Heathen World, who did not acknowledge and maintain this great Truth. Δοκεῖ τοῦτο τοῖς πλείστοις καὶ σοφωτάτοις, says * *Plutarch*, It is the Opinion of the most, and wisest of them; And just before more at large; Παμπάλαιος αὕτη κάτεισιν ἐκ Θεολόγων καὶ Νομοθετῶν εἰς τε ποιητὰς καὶ φιλοσόφους δόξα. This Tradition, says he, is very ancient, deduc'd from the Eldest Theologists and Legislators to the Poets and Philosophers, whose first Author cannot be found, and yet hath gain'd firm and unshaken Belief, not only in ordinary Discourses and Reports, but hath likewise diffus'd it self into the Mysteries and Sacrifices both of *Greeks* and *Barbarians*: The Truth of which Assertion, we find amply confirm'd by the concurrent Testimony of *Diogenes Laertius*, † who tells of the *Persian Magi*, that they acknowledg'd two distinct Principles, Ἀγαθὸν Δαίμονα καὶ κακὸν, a Good and a Bad *Dæmon*; and for the Confirmation of what he says, quotes *Eudoxus*, *Hermippus*, *Aristotle*, and *Theopompus*. And the *Egyptian Typho* is in every ones mouth, to whom they ascrib'd all that was evil; as they did whatever was good to *Isis* and *Osiris*. Neither did this Opinion confine

* *Lib. de Isid. & Osir.* p. 369.

† *Proœm. ad vit. Philosoph.*

it

it self within the narrower Limits of *Egypt* and *Persia*; but, like *Nebuchadnezzar*'s Tree, planted and rooted in the midst of the Earth, it grew and was strong, and the Boughs thereof reach'd unto Heaven, and the Branches thereof to the end of all the Earth. The *Romans* did not shake off its Leaves, or cut off its Branches; and the *Græcians* delighted themselves under the Shadow of it: the latter as * *Plutarch* witnesseth, attributing what was good to *Jupiter Olympius*, what was evil to *Hades*; the former, saith † *A. Gellius*, sacrificing to *Dijovis*, that he might do them good, and appeasing his Anti-God *Vejovis*, as he might do them no harm.

* *Lib. de Isid. & Osirid.* p. 370.

† *Noct. Attic.* l. 5. c. 12.

It must indeed be confessed, That this Opinion, (as 'tis vulgarly understood) how ancient and universal soever, is diametrically opposite both to Scripture and Reason; it setting up two contrary Principles equally invested with infinite Power, and so by necessary Consequence destroying them both, with many other Absurdities and Contradictions, which this is not a proper time to enumerate. Yet this doth not diminish one Ray from the Illustration it gives to my present purpose, while it clearly and evidently demonstrates that the Heathen World did concur in the Testimony

ny of a wicked *Dæmon*; which, as *Porphyry* relates in the Close of his Letter to *Anebo*, was vulgarly known by the name of the Deceiver.

But if we advance from the Ancient to the more Modern Philosophers, we shall find, that, like the Sun, the higher this Doctrine of Evil Spirits ascended, the fairer and clearer it gradually shew'd it self; and that breaking in some measure through those thick Mists of Error, which had grievously over-run it since its first Rising, it at length diffus'd again a true and genuine Light over the Minds of Men, notwithstanding those little Spots, which still appear'd in its Face. *Plu-Plutarch* indeed seems not over-willing to embrace it; yet he doubts he can give no good Account of those Phantasms or Apparitions which haunted the Excellent and Philosophical *Dion* and *Brutus*, unless he receives, τὸ τῶν πάνυ παλαιῶν λόγον, as he calls it, that very ancient Tradition, that there are certain impious and fascinating *Dæmons*, which envy good Men, and withstand their Enterprises, by creating Fears and Troubles to them, that so they may hinder them in their pursuit of Vertue, left, by continuing steadfast and unblameable in Good, they should after Death be made Partakers

* *Proœm. ad Vit. Dion.*

Partakers of greater Felicity than they enjoy. Not unlike to this, is the Description which *Jamblichus* gives of them; † who critically decyphering the different Appetitions of the Gods, Archangels, Angels, and *Dæmons*, expressly asserts, Οὐδ' ἁμῶς τὸ θεῖον καὶ ὅσον ἐστὶν Ἀγαθὸν Δαιμόνιον ὑπηρετεῖ τοῖς παρανόμοις εἰς τὰ Ἀφροδίσια τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἐπιθυμίαις, That the good *Dæmons* do not administer to Mens Lusts, or prompt them to any Impiety; but that they are Evil *Dæmons*, who inflict Diseases upon their Bodies, and enslave their Souls to Sensual Appetites, τοὺς τ' ἐπὶ τὸ πῦρ σπεύδοντας, and depress and clip the Wings of them who generously aspire to the [illegible] Regions of Immortality. [illegible] extravagantly calls τοὺς φύσει [illegible] Δαίμονας, *Dæmons* essentially wicked, who yet take upon them to be good and of a truly Divine Nature, and do therefore command their Worshippers to be just and holy, whilst in truth they have no care of Holiness and Virtue, but do studiously contrive the Ruin of Mankind. And in many other places of that admirable Book *De Mysteriis Ægyptiorum*, he excellently describes the malignant Temper of these Evil Spirits; so that tho' in the main he closely [illegible] to the *Egyptian* Theology, yet here [illegible]

actly

† *De Myst. Egypt.* sect. 2. cap. 6. & sect. 4. cap. 13. *Edit.* Oxon.

‖ Sect. 4. cap. 7.

actly treads in the Steps of his Master *Porphyry*, * who tells us, That there are a sort of Spirits ἀπατηλῆς τῆς φύσεως of a deceitful Nature, who turn themselves into all Forms and Shapes, (the very Description, that is given of them in Sacred Writ) καὶ ὑποδύντες τὰ τῶν ἄλλων θεῶν πρόσωπα τῆς ἡμετέρας ἀβουλίας ἀπολαύουσι, and taking upon themselves the Persons of good *Dæmons*, craftily insinuate into their unwary Worshippers, that they are the Causes of all Good as well as of Evil, whereas indeed they assist Men in nothing that is really Good; but do only cheat, delude, and impose upon them, whilst they feast their Nostrils with the Fumes of the Altar, and make it their business to throw Rubbs in their ways who walk in the Paths of Vertue. *Proclus* delivers the very same Doctrine: ἐν ταῖς ἁγιοτάταις τῶν τελετῶν, says he, πρὸ τῆς θεοῦ παρουσίας Δαιμονίων χθονίων τινῶν ἐκβολαὶ προφαίνονται. Some, I know, would have these Earthly *Dæmons* to be only good Spirits of an inferiour Order, who constantly attended the Superiour Deities; but if we consider that they took upon them these false Titles, and personated their Superiours only that they might the better delude their Worshippers, we must needs confess them to be of the other sort; especially since the Philo-

* *Epist. ad Anabon. & de Abstin. l. 2. p. 199.*

Philosopher * elsewhere fully explains himself, and in a whole Chapter abundantly lays open the Malignity of these Spirits, almost in the same Words, as those Christian Writers † *Tertullian* || *Minut. Felix*, and ** St. *Cyprian* have done. In short, †† *Porphyry* distinguisheth the *Dæmons*, which the *Græcians* worshipped, into Good and Bad; the Former they call'd Αἰθερίους, ἐμπυρίους, ἀερίους, ἐνοειδοῖς, νοεροὺς, ψυχικοὺς; the Latter, ποικίλους, ἀλόγους, προσγείους, ἐνύλους. And as though he had a mind to subvert the very Foundations of Ethnick Theology he no less dogmatically than truly asserts, Ὅτι οὐδὲ τοῖς Θεοῖς, ἀλλὰ Δαίμοσι τὰς θυσίας τὰς διὰ τῶν αἱμάτων προσήγαγον. Put Θεοῖς in the Singular Number, and he says with St. *Paul*, That what the Heathens thus sacrific'd, they sacrific'd to Devils, and not to God. From all which put together, it evidently appears, That the thinking Sages of the Heathen World had a clear and distinct Idea of the Malignity of some Evil Spirits; which we Christians know to be Apostate or Fallen Angels.

2. These wicked and malignant *Dæmons* are permitted to wander up and down in the Earth. *Minut. Felix* tells us of *Hosthanes*, whom he calls the First of the *Magi*, that he deliver'd a tradition of some malig-

* *In Alcibiadem.*

† *Apol.* c. 22.

|| *In Octavio.*

** *De Idolorum Vanitate.*

†† *De Abst.* l. 2. *& apud Iambl. de Myst. Egypt.* sect. 1. c. 18.

nant *Dæmons*, which wander to and fro in the Earth, and are Enemies to Mankind; and both the *Jews*, with most of the * Fathers of the four first Centuries, and also the *Pythagoreans* and *Platonists*, and other Sects, have carried the Notion yet higher, affirming that not only the whole Circumference of this Lower World, but that likewise the several Regions of the Air, and all that Space above the Globe of the Earth to the Face of Heaven, is full of *Dæmons* or Evil Spirits, who serve under their ᵛ Ἀρχων or Prince, and are commission'd and sent out by him to inveigle undiscerning Mortals into Ruin and Destruction. Thus the great * Patron of the *Egyptian* Mysteries does not hesitate to assert, ὡς ζυνωμολόγηται, that without all Controversie these Spirits have a vast and almost unlimited Power over the Affairs of Men, and in the Government of this World; and therefore † he indifferently calls them Ἀρχοντας, κοσμοκρατορας, τὰς τῶ ὑπὸ σελήνην στοιχεῖα διοικοῦντας, Governours, Rulers of this World, who manage all Sublunary things as they please. And indeed, he seems here to stretch himself much beyond his Measure, and not to speak like an undisciplin'd, unilluminated Philosopher. For the Saviour of the World himself, who best knew what Power he had given to this Enemy

* *Vide eruditissimum illum virum Josephum Mede* l. 1. *serm.* 4.

* *Sect.* 4. *cap.* 13.

† *Sect.* 2. *cap.* 3, 7.

Enemy of Mankind, * ſtiles him Ἀρχοντα τȣ̃ κόσμȣ τȣ́τȣ, *the Prince of this World*; and the great Apoſtle of the Gentiles advanceth yet farther, expreſly † calling him, *the God of this World*: both which mighty Denominations ſufficiently indicate, that the Devil is more than a petty Prince in this World. Nay in the ſixth Chapter of the Epiſtle to the *Epheſians*, he delivers himſelf in ſuch terms as ſeem to betray the Reading of the forecited Philoſopher: Put on, ſays he, the whole Armour of God, that ye may be able to repell all the Temptations and Stratagems, and to hold out againſt all the Aſſaults of your Adverſaries; for your Danger is great, and your Enemies powerful; you wreſtle not againſt Fleſh and Blood, *i. e.* againſt any ordinary Human Enemies, but againſt the ſeveral Ranks of Devils, πρὸς τὰς Ἀρχὰς, againſt Principalities, againſt Powers, πρὸς τȣ̀ς κοσμοκρατορας τȣ̃ Σκότȣς τȣ̃ Αἰῶνος τȣ́τȣ, againſt the Rulers of the Darkneſs of this World, againſt ſpiritual Wickedneſs, or (as the ‖ *Syriack* reads) wicked Spirits in high places. Here, as the Reverend and Learned Dr. *Hammond* obſerves, Wicked Spirits in high places are diſtinguiſh'd from the Rulers of the Darkneſs of this World; noting thereby ſeveral ſorts of Devils, either

* Joh. 12. 31.

† 2 Cor. 4. 4.

‖ *Grotium videas, & Hammondum.*

in respect of their Mansions, ἀερίων καὶ ἐπιγείων πνευμάτων, aerial or earthly Spirits; or else of the Inclinations which they suggest. The Earthly Devils suggesting grosser, carnal Appetites, the Filthiness of the Flesh; the Aerial, Pride, Vain-glory, Malice, and such like, the Filthiness of the Spirit.

But from the Consideration of the destructive and implacable Temper of these Spirits of Darkness, the truly Philosophical and most Thinking Pagans (follow'd herein by some eminent and ancient * Christians) have been induc'd to believe, that every individual Person is not only the common Scope of their Envy and Malice; but that (as the Poet sings) *Quisque suos patitur manes*, every Man has likewise his peculiar Evil Angel, which constantly attends him, curiously observing his Faults, and endeavouring by all Arts and Stratagems to ruine and destroy him. Thus every *Pythagorean* had two *Genii*, a Good one and a bad one, the latter of which, *Olympiodorus* calls τὸν Δαίμονα δικαστικὸν, that *Dæmon* which hales the Soul to Judgment, and which, he says, follows her into this World against her Will; whereas she chooseth her Good Genius to be her Leader and Guardian, and, as *Plato* speaks, ἀποπληρωτὴν τῶν αἱρεθέντων, an Accomplisher of all her

* *Vide Hermæ Pastorem*, lib. 2. mandat 6. *Edit.* Ox.

her Desires. *Mahomet* has adopted the same Doctrine into his Religion; telling us withal, That they sit on Mens Shoulders with Table-Books in their Hands, and that the one writes down all the Good, the other all the Evil a Man does.

But whatever we think of this, certain it is, That the Evil Spirits are not only permitted sometimes to tempt Men to bring Mischief upon themselves, but that many of the Disasters and Calamities which are brought upon the World, may also be attributed to the same pernicious Agents. *Jamblicus* was very sensible of this; and therefore he * calls them τιμωρὸς τὸς δαίμονας, punishing or revenging *Dæmons*; and for the same Reason the † *Chaldaick* Oracles stile them κύνας χθονίους καὶ ποινὰς μεροπων ἀλιτεμας, Earthly Dogs and Executioners of Mankind. ‖ *Porphyry* is of the same Opinion; ascribing the Miseries of Humane Life, such as Plagues, Famines, Sterilities, Earthquakes, Droughts, to no other Cause than the Malice of these *Dæmons*: and he is follow'd herein by *Bodinus*, who attributes not only all prodigious Thunders, Storms, and Tempests, but even your most ordinary Winds to Good or Bad Angels. Now tho' I can by no means subscribe to him in this Latitude, yet 'tis sufficiently

* *Sect.* 2. *c.* 7.

† *Gallæum consulas ad calcem Orac. Sibyll.*

‖ *De Abst. l.* 2 *pag.* 198, 202.

ficiently evident from the Hiſtory of *Job*, that as to the former Opinion, both he and the other Philoſophers are much in the right. For * there we find him both conſuming the Good Man's Sheep and Servants with Lightning, and alſo by a great and violent Wind from the Wilderneſs, overturning the Houſe upon his Sons and Daughters: Nay, the Royal Pſalmiſt puts the Caſe beyond all reaſonable Doubt; aſſuring us, That the dreadful and tragical Scene of multiply'd Signs and Wonders in the Land of *Egypt* was acted by the Miniſtry of Evil Spirits. He caſt upon them, ſays he, the Fierceneſs of his Anger, Wrath, and Indignation, and Trouble, ἀποστολὴ δι' ἀγγέλων πονηρῶν, by ſending Evil Angels among them: And the Apoſtle ſeems to aſſert no leſs, when he || calls the Devil the Prince of the Power of the Air.

* *Cap.* 1.

† *Pſal.* 78. 49.

|| *Eph.* 2. 2.

But as 'tis certain, that the Devil is permitted ſometimes actually to tempt Men, ſometimes to amaze them only by the horrible Fragors of Storms and Tempeſts; ſo likewiſe 'tis evident, that he is a Perſon capable of a delegate Employment in ſome great Mutation of States: and many Probabilities have been obſerv'd by wiſe Perſonages, ſays the Excellent Biſhop †† *Taylor*, perſwading that the Grandeur of the *Roman* Empire

†† *Great Exemplar*, pag. 100.

Empire was in the Degrees of Increment and Decrement permitted to the Power and Managing of the Devil; that the Greatneſs of that Government, being in all Appearance full of Advantage to Satan's Kingdom, and employ'd for the Diſimprovement of the weak Beginnings and improbable Increaſe of Chriſtianity, might give Luſtre and Demonſtration to it, that it came from God; ſince the great Permiſſions of Power made to the Devil, and acted with all Art and Malice in Defiance of the Religion, could produce no other effect upon it, but that it made it grow greater; and the Greatneſs was made more miraculous, ſince the Devil, when his Chain was off, fain would, but could not ſuppreſs it.

But perhaps it may be here objected, That tho' we muſt confeſs, that before the Myſterious Incarnation of the Son of God the Devil had ſuch vaſt Dominions in the World, that he ſeem'd actually to have poſſeſs'd what God promis'd to his Son, even *the Heathen for his Inheritance, and the uttermoſt Parts of the Earth for his Poſſeſſion*; yet, ſince the Triumphant Aſcenſion of our Bleſſed Saviour, we cannot ſuppoſe, without Contradiction to Sacred Writ, that he now retains any at all, ſince both

* Joh. 12. 31. † 2 Pet. 2. 4.

* Chriſt himſelf aſſures us, that *he hath caſt him out*, and St. † *Peter* expreſly declares, that *they are caſt down to Hell, and deliver'd into Chains of Darkneſs to be reſerv'd unto Judgment.* To this we anſwer,

Thoſe bright Sons of the Morning, which grew vertiginous through the Sublimity of Happineſs, and are moſt deſervedly charg'd with Folly for leaving their own Habitations, are indeed bound over to Eternal Pains, and lie at preſent in a dark, miſerable and wretched Condition. Whereever they be, they carry Hell in their Breaſts, and read in their Conſciences the large Characters of Divine Vengeance, conſigning them over to Everlaſting Woe and Miſery. But Yet we muſt needs acknowledge, that 'tis abundantly evident, both from * Scripture and Reaſon, That their preſent Puniſhment, how dolorous and bitter ſoever, will be much heightned and increas'd after the Great Day of Accounts; ſo that tho' I will not deny, but that (as the School-men and other Divines of Latter Times would have it) many of theſe infernal Bands may be ſo cloſely committed to Priſon, that they are never permitted to make Excurſions into the Earth; yet, on the other ſide, we may dare to affirm, that the All-wiſe God does often ſuffer great

* Mat. 8. 29. Mar. 5. 7. Luk. 8. 31.

Troops

Troops and vaſt Multitudes of them to come abroad into this World, either for the Trial of the Good, or for the Puniſhment of the Bad, or to be to us what the Remnant of the curſed Nations was, to the ſinful *Iſraelites*, even Pricks in our Eyes, and Thorns in our Sides. And, if we impartially conſider, neither this Text of St. *Peter*, nor the parallel one of St. *Jude*, do any thing evacuate or enervate this Aſſertion. For if they muſt needs be underſtood to prove ſuch an actual condemning of the Devil to Chains at preſent, that he ſhall not come forth till hal'd to Judgment; if I ſay, the Sence of the Words muſt needs be this, we cannot allow them by any means to be true. For even when theſe Epiſtles where written, (which is ſuppos'd to have been a little before the Deſtruction of the *Jews*, his Dominions were large, and his Empire extenſive. He did not only work powerfully in the Children of Diſobedience, who were taken Captive by him at his Will, but had alſo began to Lord it over God's own Heritage. He was daily ſowing Tares among the Wheat, and endeavouring to choak the good Seed, and to render it fruitleſs. Like an hungry Lion, he roar'd after the Prey, and began to glut his Jaws with the Blood of the ſlain; and

upon

upon this account, the Apoſtle, in my Text, warns the Chriſtians to watch, and to be always upon their Guard againſt ſo potent and vigilant an Adverſary. Though therefore the victorious Saviour of the World hath utterly diveſted theſe Evil Spirits of their Power, and made his Conqueſts over them publickly diſcernible to all Men, by throwing them out of their Temples, gagging and ſilencing them in their Oracles, and ſo dragging, as it were, Principalities and all the Powers of Darkneſs ſhackled and unarm'd at the Wheels of his triumphant Chariot. Though, I ſay, ſince the towring *Roman* Eagle, which for many Ages had ſpread its all-conquering Wings over the trembling World, ſubmitted her ſelf, and gave place to the humble Sign of the Croſs, the Sound of the Goſpel is gone out into all Lands, and its Words unto the Ends of the World; ſo that the Kingdoms of the World are become the Kingdoms of the Lord, and almoſt all Nations do him Service; yet, Certain it is, that the Devil is not yet totally baniſhed out of this World: For in the 23d Chap. of the *Revelations* and the 3d Ver. we have an account of a cloſer Impriſonment of Satan, and ſo of his Regiments of Evil Spirits, that ſhall be before the Worlds End, than is yet for the

the preſent; and 'tis alſo manifeſt from the * Hiſtory of Primitive Times, that after the Death, Reſurrection, and Aſcenſion of Chriſt, he was ſtill permitted to be in the World. For even in the Times of *Julian* the Apoſtate, we find his Oracle yet ſtanding; and 'twas the conſtant Cuſtom of the Church, in the firſt Ages, to excommunicate, or, as S. *Paul* phraſeth it, to deliver enormous and incorrigible Sinners to Satan, as to a Lictor or Executioner, who was wont to ſift and ſhake them terribly, and by inflicting Diſeaſes and Torments upon the Body, forc'd them to fly for Refuge to the Arms of their offended Father. Now therefore, we muſt indeed acknowledge with the † Inhabitants of Heaven, that Salvation and Strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the Power of his Chriſt, is come unto us; for the great Dragon is caſt out, that old Serpent, call'd the Devil, and Satan, which deceiv'd the whole World: He is caſt out of his Strong-holds, and his Angels can no longer exerciſe their Tyranny in the Earth: But yet he ſtill ſitteth lurking in the thieviſh Corners of the World, and privily in his lurking Dens does he plot againſt the Innocent; his Eyes are wholly ſet againſt the Saints. Though his Hands are tied, and he

* Sozom. Hiſt. l. 5. c. 19. p. 627.

† Rev. 12. 9, 10.

he is bound to his Good-behaviour; yet, as an Explorator or Searcher for faults, he goes up and down to and fro in the Earth.

I know there are ſome, who will be ready to object, That this Relaxation of Evil-Spirits from their dark houſes of Sorrow, can by no means conſiſt with the Wiſdom of God; For ſince his Juſtice condemn'd them to unſpeakable and Eternal Torments, 'tis next to Madneſs (ſay they) to ſuppoſe, that he would ſuffer their Pains to receive any Diminution; which yet the Hurt which according to this Poſition they are ſometimes permitted to do to Mankind, would certainly afford them.

But this ſeeming Contradiction will be eaſily reconcil'd, if we conſider, that the like Argument may be urg'd as well againſt the Abſence of good Angels from the Court of Heaven. For ſince 'tis piouſly believ'd on all hands, that the Bleſs'd Inhabitants of thoſe ſerene and peaceful Manſions are now (the time of Probation being gone long ago) fully and unalterably confirm'd in Happineſs and Glory; how can we imagine, that their heavenly Father would be ſo unkind, as to deprive them of the Beatifick Intuition of his interiour Beauties, and, as it were, to baniſh his beloved Sons for a time from the Regions of Bliſs? And yet

we

we need not be beholden neither to the *Egyptians* nor to the *Platoniſts* for the Confirmation of this Truth; the Sacred Hiſtory, more than once, aſſuring us, if they do not conſtantly adhere to, and inſeparably accompany Good Men, yet that they often deſcended to ſuccour them in their Dangers, and are alſo ſtill λειτουργικὰ πνεύματα, Miniſtring Spirits, ſent forth to miniſter to them, who ſhall be heirs of Salvation.

Wherefore, in Anſwer to this Objection, we may conſider, That Kindneſs and Compaſſion are ſo twiſted and interwoven (as I may ſo ſay) with the very Eſſences of theſe glorious Creatures, that 'tis Heaven to them to relieve and aſſiſt their Fellow-Servants here below; which being joyn'd to that infinite Delight and Satisfaction, which they undoubtedly receive in the Execution of the Divine Will, makes abundant Recompence for the ſeeming Loſs of that more plentiful Harveſt of Joys which the Bleſſed reap in the Manſions above.

And on the other ſide: The Evagation of Evil Spirits from their infernal Dungeon, muſt rather afford them freſh Occaſions of Torture, than adminiſter any true Solace or real Content. For ſo fierce and implacable, ſo inſolent and outrageous, ſo envious and

Eternally

Eternally malicious, are these Sons of Perdition, that it must needs be Death to them to be frustrated in their Designs, and worse (if possible) than Hell it self, to see their Plots and Machinations all defeated and unravell'd. How then must they fret and tear their Bowels for Grief, to find their weak Attempts trampled on in great Disdain and Triumph by the Regenerate Sons of *Adam*, who dwell securely under the Defence of the Most High, and abide constantly under the Shadow of the Almighty? To see themselves sunk into so low and despicable a condition, that they are as light and contemptible as the Dust before the Wind, whilst the Angels of the Lord persecute and Scatter them? How must they be cloath'd with Shame, and Dishonour and Confusion of Face, to see these little Mists they endeavour'd to raise, utterly dispers'd and vanish'd, and the Glory of the Lord shining round about the World, and appearing out of *Sion* in perfect Beauty? But not to prosecute these Considerations any farther: The bare dismal Apprehensions of that accumulated Punishment, which after the Last Day they must certainly undergo for all the Evil they have done amongst Men, are sufficient to counterpoise whatever accidentary Satisfaction

they

they ſeem to receive upon the Earth.

I foreſee but one Scruple more, that may ariſe againſt this Diſcourſe; which is, That ſuppoſing Men were very well diſpos'd to believe all we have ſaid, yet theſe Antick, ridiculous Circumſtances, which in the Narrations even of the graveſt Perſonages do accompany many things of this nature, ſtrongly argue the Uncertainty of them all.

But, to this 'twill be ſufficient to anſwer, with the Learned and Judicious Dr. * *More*, That the Converſation of Evil Spirits amongſt us in this World ought to ſeem never the more incredible for thoſe ludicrous Paſſages. For 'tis not at all diſconſonant to Reaſon, that ſuch *Dæmons*, which have their Haunts near this lower Air and Earth, are variouſly † laps'd into the enormous Love and Liking of the Animal Life, having utterly forſaken the Divine; and that therefore there are ſuch Paſſions and Affections in them, as are in Wicked Men and Beaſts; and that ſome of them eſpecially bear the ſame Analogy to an Unfallen Angel, that an Ape or Monkey does to a Sober Man; ſo that all their Pleaſure is in unlucky ridiculous Tricks. This (I am ſure) is fully and clearly atteſted by * *Porphyry*,

* Appendix to the Antidote againſt Atheiſm, *c.* 12. *par.* 3.

† *Hanc, opinor, ob cauſam audiunt apud S. Lucam c.* 4. *v.* 33. *Δαιμόνια ἀκάθαρτα & paſſim apud Ethnicos penates, Lares, Lamiæ, Empuſæ, Fauni, Satyri, Lemures, &c.*

* *De Abſt.* lib. 2.

† *Celſus,*

‡ Orig. cont. Cels. l. 8. p. 417. & l. 7. p. 334.

† *Celſus*, *Origen*, St. *Baſil* (or whoever elſe was the Author of that Commentary upon *Iſaiah*) and others. Wherefore,

3. I come to ſhew with what indefatigable Pains, and various Stratagems, they ſeek to Ruin Men, and with what Cruelty they treat them when they are delivered up into their hands. This ſublunary Region indeed, which Man inhabits, is nothing elſe but a continued Scene of Changes and Revolutions. All things in this natural World are ſubject to *Ebbs* and *Flows*, and nothing is found in it that acts either uniformly or conſtantly. But the Devil's Malice is of another Conſtitution; it ſuffers no Intermiſſions, no Viciſſitudes, but (like that ſtock of Motion which that great Mechanical Wit *Deſcartes* ſuppoſeth the Univerſe at firſt endow'd with) it continues always in the ſame proportion, and is never intended or remitted. For tho' he may act more fiercely at one time than at another, yet certainly he purſues his Revenge in general with the ſame Earneſtneſs and Vigour, and always wills our Ruine in the ſame meaſure of Volition. Hence it comes to paſs, that having once gain'd Permiſſion to begin his Aſſault, he, like Fire, has no Power to ſuſpend his Act, but is as entirely determin'd by the Fullneſs of his Malice,

as a Natural Agent by the Appetites of Nature. Thus, as though it had been a small thing to have caus'd infinite Numbers of the Heavenly Host to let fall their Crowns, and to have swept away with his Tail the third part of the Stars of Heaven, [illegible] him in the very Infancy of the World, nay (if some say true) in the same Day [illegible] in Man was Created, plotting [illegible] ving to ruin all Mankind in [illegible]. And tho' 'tis believ'd, for very good Reasons, that he could not [illegible] and Subtilty [illegible] and [illegible] before the Flood; yet we are [illegible] that he laid the Foundations of his Empire very early in the World. For [illegible] say, [illegible] even in the time of [illegible], whereas the sixth from Noah, Idolatry began [illegible] to prevail; these [illegible] Impostors [illegible] through the Images, which Men generally [illegible] themselves in Memory of their Ancestors, and to whom upon all Occasions they address'd themselves with the most [illegible] Veneration. And from [illegible] imperious and domineering, how [illegible] arrogant, and cruel, how [illegible] intolerable, he shew'd himself to his Worshippers, till Christianity appear'd in the

World, all Histories, both Sacred and Profane, do abundantly testifie. Having exalted himself above all that is called God, and (the *Jews* excepted) rendred the whole Creation subject to Vanity, he sat himself hardly in the House of God, acting there like himself, the grand Chief of the Dragons. He sent Miseries and Calamities upon the Theatre of the World for his Sport and Passime, and set on one part of the Creation to bait another for his Diversion. Like the immane *Roman* Emperor, he took Pleasure to exercise Men with Dragons, and to see them may bloody Fight before him. Neither thousands of Rivers nor ten thousands of Rivers of Oyl, could satisfie the raging Thirst or Bestiary of his revenged Wall. He must needs [illegible] ces the more exquisite Prey, and [illegible] Passime in Rivers of Human Blood. Thus in *Cretes* and *Asiatic* under the Name of *Saturn* he pleased his Pers with the [illegible] Groans and distinct Accents [illegible] ring [illegible] the [illegible] [illegible] d [illegible]. Thus in *Cyprus*, [illegible] *Lacedaemonia*; in *Carthage*, [illegible] [illegible]; in *Aetolia*, *Scythia*, [illegible] and [illegible] it fell, he made himself [illegible] with the Blood of Men; which is [illegible] not only by those Christian Wrin[illegible]

* Ter

* *Tertullian* and † *Lactantius*, but [illegible] by that acute Philosopher and Enemy to Christianity ‖ *Porphyry*; who, after he had reckon'd up in how many places of the World Human Sacrifices were in use, confesses 'twas done at *Rome* in the Feasts of *Jupiter Latialis* even in his time. [illegible] as tho' the Air had been corrupted [illegible] Men by natural Breathing drew in the Infection, this Conceipt [illegible] far as the Limits of [illegible] Land is [illegible] one [illegible] were [illegible] but even [illegible] entire People, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

of Terror, affrighted them into the Worship and Adoration of his Person. Yet even then (so great is the Pride, and Unbounded the Malice of this cursed Arch-Dæmon) as though Crowns and Septers, and all the Tributary Princes and Potentates of the Earth had been too little; as though the Glory of so much Power, and the infinite multitude of Slaves and Vassals avail'd him nothing at all, whilst good *Mordecai* bowed not, nor did him Reverence, he was restless and dissatisfied, and with haughty *Haman* incessantly sought his Ruin. He repin'd as those peaceable Heloyonian Days which under the kind influence of Heaven pious Souls did enjoy, and whom Providence hong'd in he chiefs long'd to devour. This is fully illustrated in the Instance of *Job*, where, as soon as God had permitted to put forth his hand and touch all that he had, how did he [illegible] all the Mischiefs of his Malice could invent, and with greater Eagerness than that of an Eagle or Vulture, seized on the Prey [illegible] plunder'd him in his Estate (says the Reverend and Learned Dr. *Cave*) by the *Sabæan* and *Chaldæan* Free-booters, who left him not an Ox or Ass of all his Herd, not a Sheep or a Lamb either for Food or Sacrifice. He endeavour'd

* *Patriarchal Dispensation.*

vour'd all he could to blot out his Name from under Heaven, having slain his seven Sons and three Daughters at once by the Fall of an House. He blasted him in his Credit and Reputation, and that by his neareſt Friends, who had traduc'd and challeng'd him for a Diſſembler and an Hypocrite. He ruin'd him in his Health, having ſmitten him with ſore Ulcers from the Crown of the Head to the Sole of the Foot, till his Body became a very Hoſpital of Diſeaſes. Nay, that not the leaſt Dawnings of Conſolation might peep through this black Cloud of Sorrow and Anguiſh, beſides thoſe ghaſtly Spectacles and horrid Appariſions whereby he infeſted his * Dreams, he ſuggeſted to his † waking Thoughts ſad and inconſolable Reflexions; the Arrows of the Almighty being ſhot within him, the Poyſon whereof drank up his Spirits, the Terrors of God ſetting themſelves in Array againſt him. And thus, for at leaſt twelve Months, ſay the *Jews*, probably for a much longer time, did this grand Engineer of all Miſchief wreak his Infernal Malice upon this Good Man, till God in Mercy put a Period to this tedious Tryal, and crown'd his Sufferings with an ample Reſtitution.

* Cap. 7. ver. 14.
† Cap. 6. ver. 4.

But if we aſcend from theſe Times to the firſt Plantings of the Goſpel, we ſhall find him yet more eagerly proſecuting all Acts of Hoſtility; poſſeſſing Mens Bodies, tormenting them with ſundry kinds of Diſeaſes, and endeavouring, if poſſible, to break the very Golden Chain of Predeſtination. Now that dreadful Woe, which the * Angel with a loud Voice denounc'd from Heaven againſt the Inhabitants of the Earth and of the Sea, was fulfill'd: for the Devil was come amongſt Men having great Wrath, becauſe he had but a ſhort time. He ſaw the Prophecies were all fulfill'd; that the Scepter was departed from *Judah*, and a Law-giver from between his Feet; that therefore *Shiloh* was ſuddenly to come, unto whom the gathering of all People ſhould be. He ſaw, that his Coming was now grown, not only the Expectation of the *Jews*; but the common diſcourſe too of all the Heathen Nations. That there was Μέγας ἐν τῷ ἄγγελος ὁ Πρόδρομος, as St. *Cyril* ſays of him, a great and eminent Harbinger, who in the Power and Spirit of *Elias* introduc'd and uſher'd in the Arrival of this Son of Righteouſneſs, and ſpake great and glorious things of this Son of God. Wherefore, not to mention his perſecuting him, a poor helpleſs In-

* Rev. 12. 10, 12.

fant

ſant by jealous *Herod*, nor yet to re-mind you of thoſe many Troubles, which he afterwards created him from the hypocritical, ambitious, blood-thirſty *Phariſees*; that he might leave no ſtone unturn'd, nothing unattempted, whereby he might compaſs his Deſigns, he impudently attacks the Redeemer of the World himſelf, and perceiving him to be a Perſon of greater Sanctity and Perfection, than to be mov'd by ſenſual and low Deſires, he thought Ambition might be moſt likely to Ruine him, ſince 'twas that, which prevail'd ſo powerfully upon himſelf; and accordingly the Dominions of the World are offer'd to the Sovereign Diſpoſer of them, and the Heir of all the Kingdoms of the Earth is tempted to accept of his own, at the expence of falling down, and worſhipping the Devil. Which brings me to the other part of this my Third Particular, which is, to obſerve, what various Ways and Methods this cunning Serpent takes to intrap us.

When the Devil intends a Battery, he views the Strength and Situation of the Place; and where he eſpies the weakeſt Guards, there he moſt vigorouſly makes his Onſet. True it is, that in our Saviour he could have no ſuch Advantage; but how Fatal it has prov'd to his Spouſe, the Church, no Man, that

juſtly glories in the Title of a Chriſtian, can be ignorant. He ſtirr'd up Kings and Princes, and the greateſt Powers and Policies of the World, to confederate and combine together to extirpate and baniſh it from off the Face of the Earth. By Arms and Armies, by Strength and Subtilty, by Malice and Cruelty, he endeavour'd to ſtifle and ſmother it in its Infancy and firſt Delivery into the World. But when he found, that, notwithſtanding all this Oppoſition, it ſtill lifted up its Head in triumph, and outbrav'd the fierceſt Storms of the moſt violent Perſecutions; that neither Swords, nor Axes, nor Croſſes, nor wild Beaſts, nor Chains, nor Fire, nor all other Inſtruments of the moſt exquiſite Tortures could prevail any thing at all; but that, as he complainingly tells *Porphyry*, they might as well, and to better purpoſe, attempt to write upon the Surface of the Water, or to fly like a Bird in the Air, than to reduce the Chriſtian from his Sentiments, and compel him to blaſpheme, he immediately betakes himſelf to other Counſels, and ſeeks to undermine that Faith, which he ſaw he could not carry by open Aſſault and Battery. And how ſucceſsfully he thus work'd in God's Vineyard, the many Hereſies, which grew up together

gether with the Goſpel, do ſufficiently demonſtrate.

But to paſs from Univerſals to Particulars, from Communities of Men to Individuals: Let us through all the intermediate Ages retreat to the Origin of the World, and we ſhall find him even then giving a full and convictive Evidence of that Craft and Subtilty which he exercis'd more at large in Succeeding Generations. He beheld our firſt Father entertaining his Wife with the fondeſt Careſſes of too amorous a Fancy; and therefore by the Mediation of ſo dear an Object he preſents the Temptation. He knew that his Arguments were not convincing of themſelves, and therefore the beauteous hands of the young Virgin-Miſtreſs are made the Orators. Thus afterwards in the ears of envious *Saul* he Sounded the glorious Panegyricks of his Rival, and ſuggeſted to his remiſs and unguarded Succeſſor the ſofter Whiſpers of the Spirit of Fornication. Before young Beginners in Religion he diſplays a frightful Scene of enſuing Difficulties; that 'tis a ſolitary, loneſome, melancholy Profeſſion, under whoſe baleful Influence nothing but Roots of Bitterneſs, can ſpring up. He inſinuates into their Heads, that God is a conſuming Fire to all alike; that he is buſied in Heaven,

Heaven, not only to destroy the Wicked, and to dash in pieces Vessels of Dishonour, but likewise to break the bruised Reed, and to cast smoaking Flax into the Flames of Hell. He suggests to them, that Christ is a hard Task Master; who tho' he very well knows, that our Foundation is in the Clay, yet unreasonably obligeth us to the Work of Angels, and to the Performances of the most Exalted and Beatify'd Spirits: That though the Law is prescrib'd to Persons whose Varieties and different Constitutions cannot be regular or uniform, yet he allows no Latitude of Performance, but unmercifully binds us all to just Atoms and Points. And thus by opening his Mouth in Blasphemy against God, and by pretending to speak peaceably to Men; by deterring them either with the pretended Difficulties of Religion, or by blowing up their new-kindled Zeal into Superstition; in short, by all the Arts, which either his Hellish Malice or Policy can invent he labours to ruin the Children of Men; so that if the over-ruling hand of Providence had not put a Hook into the Nostrils of this *Leviathan*, the Foundations of the Intellectual, as well as of the Natural World, had long since been out of course. Which brings me to my Fourth and Last Particular, which is,

to

to ſhew, tho' he has Malice enough to deſtroy us all, yet that he cannot do us the leaſt Miſchief, unleſs God permits him.

4. 'Tis the Opinion, I confeſs, of the Learned Part of the World, that the Strength and Natural Faculties of this Prince of Darkneſs are nothing diminiſh'd or impair'd by his Fall; but, that he ſtill glories in the ſame Power, which ſwell'd him with ſo much Pride, as to ſay in his Heart, *I will aſcend into Heaven; I will exalt my Throne above the Stars of God; I will ſit upon the ſides of the North; I will aſcend above the Heights of the Clouds; I will be like the Moſt High.* Yet this ought not to diſcourage the weakeſt of us; for let his Strength be what it will, and his Malice ſo great, that (as the Queen of *Sheba* ſaid of *Solomon*'s Wiſdom and Proſperity) the half of it has not been told us; yet we are ſure that he has his Bounds and Limits preſcrib'd him; and that as *Jamblichus* comfortably remarks, εἷς θεός ἐστι κύριος τῶν Δαιμόνων, there is one God, who over-rules all the Legions of malignant *Daemons*. For this we have the Confeſſion of the Devil himſelf:

Δαίμονες, οἱ φοιτῶσι περὶ χθόνα καὶ περὶ πόντον,
Ἀκάματοι δάμνανται ὑπὸ μάστιγι Θεοῖο.

Hec, aliaque hujuſmodi oracula referuntur à Porphyrio, Proclo, Ethnicisque aliis; nonnulla etiam à Lactantio. Videas item Gallæum, qui hoc oraculum habet ad calcem Sibyll. pag. 43.

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The *Dæmons*, says he, which wander about the Earth, how unruly and ungovernable soever, are tam'd by the irresistable Scourge of God's Rod. And how truly he spake, the History of *Job*, and of the *Herd of Swine* make manifest and apparent: There we see they could not so much as enter the filthy Swine, till Christ had given them leave; nor touch a Hair of that good Man, till permitted from above; so that what that afflicted Saint says in another Case, is verify'd in this: *That hitherto indeed he may come, but no farther, and here shall his proud Rage be stay'd.*

From what has been thus discours'd I shall now briefly deduce two or three Corollaries, and conclude.

1. Then, Let us consider, what End and Design God has in suffering these Enemies of Mankind to be abroad in the Earth; and since we shall find, that he leads us through this great and terrible Wilderness, wherein are fiery Serpents and Scorpions, that he may humble us, and that he may prove us, to do us Good at our Latter End, let us never frustrate such gracious Purposes, nor provoke him by our Continuance in sin to let us fall into the hands of these Enemies, who already distress us

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in our very Gates. The Arrows of the Lord are every where in the Earth, and ſhall not the Inhabitants of the World learn Righteouſneſs? If we have any real Love for our ſelves, any Concern for our true and main Intereſt, let us open our Ears to Diſcipline, and preſently return from all our Iniquities. For we ſhall not ſerve God for nought: He will make an hedge about us and about our Houſe, and about all that we have, on every ſide; His Hand ſhall hold us faſt, and his Arm ſhall ſtrengthen us, ſo that the Enemy ſhall not be able to do us violence, nor theſe wicked Spirits approach to hurt us. Not to hurt us therefore I ſay, becauſe tho' he permit them to caſt us into the Furnace of Affliction, yet he does it only to refine and purifie us from our Dross. He may uſe them as ſharp and cutting Inſtruments, but then 'tis with this merciful Deſign of letting out our Corruptions. In ſhort, However they may ſometimes ſeem to triumph over us in this World, yet certainly there will be an End, and our Expectations ſhall not be cut off. When Death ſhall draw back the Curtain, the Face of things ſhall be utterly changed. Then ſhall the Righteous Man ſtand in great boldneſs before the face of ſuch as afflict-

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ed him, and made no account of his Labours; and they shall say within themselves: This is he whom we had sometime in Derision and a Proverb of Reproach; we Fools endeavour'd to make his Life Madness, and to cause his End to be without Honour; but how, in spight of all our Malice, is he numbred among the Children of God; and whilst we are condemned to Everlasting Torments, His lot is among the Saints?

2. Since we are besieg'd on every side by such potent, subtil, and treacherous Enemies, let us take care to be always upon our Guard; and since our Journey is dangerous, and our Way slippery, let him that thinks he stands surest, take continual heed lest he fall. The latter *Platonists* indeed talk much of a Class of Beings, call'd Ἀνάδες, Ἀγαθότητες, Νόες, Unites, Goodnesses, Minds or Intellects, which they suppose to be as Essentially immutable as the Father of Lights, with whom is no variableness or shadow of turning; but we have not so learnt Christ. And tho' I cannot deny, but that as some Men, for a long, obstinate uninterrupted abuse of God's Grace, are at last justly given up to their own Hearts Lusts, and suffer'd with the utmost bent of their Souls to

follow

follow their own Imaginations; so the Analogy of Reason seems to require, that others, who in spight of all Opposition, have for a long time manfully resisted the Devil, and in the midst of Temptations faithfully adher'd to the Commandments of God, should at length be so firmly established with his Free Spirit, that they should never be mov'd, but become burning Lamps to give constant Light in the Temple of God: yet since no Man, no not the Chosen Vessels and chiefest Favourites of Heaven, could scarce ever assure themselves of so happy a State, but were perpetually forc'd ὑπωπιάζειν τὸ σῶμα, to use Roughness to their Bodies, and to keep them in Subjection, lest after all they should become Cast-aways; I think it highly concerns every one of us to keep our Souls diligently, to lift up the hands that hang down, and to strengthen the feeble Knees, to hold fast that which we have, that neither Man nor Devil deprive us of our Crown.

Lastly, Let us look up to Heaven, and with Hearts full of Joy and Gratitude thank that God to whom alone we owe the happiness of all those Hours and Days of Peace, in which we sit securely under our Vines, and eat the pleasant Fruit of our Figtrees,

and

and see no Serpent winding his voluminous Trunk about the Branches, and presenting us with fair Fruit to ruin us. 'Tis the Lord's doing, that we have the Quietness of a Minute, and it ought to be marvellous in our Eyes; for if he had not put a Bit into our Enemies Mouth, but should suffer him cruelly to fall upon us, he would render us of all things in the World the most miserable. Our Tables would become a Snare to us, our Beds a Torment, our Dreams fantastick, lustful, and illusive. Every Sense should have its Object of Delight and Danger, an *Hyæna* to kiss, and to perish in its Embraces. How strongly then are we oblig'd to adore the Lord, by whom cometh Salvation, and to Love and Praise that God by whom we escape Death! Who out of the Abundance of his overflowing Goodness, miraculously rescues us from the base and miserable Slavery of these Evil Spirits into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God! O how plentiful, may we say with the Royal * Psalmist, is his Goodness, which he hath laid up for them that fear him; and that he hath prepar'd for them that put their Trust in him, even before the Sons of Men! Tho' they walk in the dark and gloomy Valleys of the Shadow of Death, and are encompass'd by Ene-

* Psal. 31. ver. 21.

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mies on every ſide, yet by his infinite Mercy and abundant Grace, he turns them from Darkneſs to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto the Living God.

Wherefore to him who is thus able to keep us from falling, and notwithſtanding all the malicious Attempts of our Ghoſtly Enemies, to preſent us faultleſs before the Preſence of his Glory with exceeding Joy; To the only wiſe God, Our Saviour, be Glory and Majeſty, Dominion and Power, now and ever. Amen.

Ser. 2.

COLOS. iii. 2.

Set your affection on things above, not on things on the Earth.

THAT 'tis our Intereſt, as well as Duty, to ſet our Affection on things above, not on things on the Earth, I ſhall (without any preliminary Diſcourſe) briefly evince from theſe following Reaſons.

I. Becauſe they only are proportion'd to the utmoſt Capacity of the Soul, and conſequently they only can yield her true Satisfaction; whereas all things here are vain, inſufficient, empty, and unſatisfying.

II. Becauſe they only are Permanent, Sure, and Certain; whereas all things here are frail, ſhort, and uncertain.

III.

III. Because they only refine and ſpiritualize our Nature, widen and enlarge our Faculties, and ſo fit and prepare us for the ſpiritual and abſtracted Entertainments of an Immortal and Divine Life; whereas all things here degravate and weigh down the Soul, reach out to her that Cup of Oblivion, which makes her forget her own Nature and Excellencies, and ingloriouſly to take up with the enjoyments of Brutes.

1. 'Tis our Intereſt, as well as Duty, to ſet our Affection on things above, not on things on the Earth, becauſe they only are proportion'd to the utmoſt Capacity of the Soul, and conſequently they only can yield her true Satisfaction; whereas all things here are vain, inſufficient empty, and unſatisfying. Whoever diligently attends to the Workings of his own Mind, and ſeriouſly conſiders the Bent, Appetites, and Inclinations of his Soul, will ſoon find her to be of ſo exalted a Nature, that not all the Good of the Creation, tho' united together and fully enjoy'd, would be able to terminate her Deſires, to employ the whole Activity of her Love, to fix her entire weight, or to detain and give Ancho-

rage to her boundleſs Aſpirations. The voluptuous *Epicurean* (whatever he pretends) can never ſatisfie the Cravings of his Soul with Corporeal Pleaſure, nor the moſt Quinteſſential *Stoick* find an αὐτάρκειαν and ἀταραξίαν, a Self-ſufficiency and Tranquility within his Breaſt, ariſing out of the Pregnancy of his own Mind and Reaſon. μεγάλας ἔχει κινήσεις ἡ ψυχή. Our Souls have ſtrong and weighty Motions, and nothing can bear them up, but ſomething permanent and immutable. They Sink through all theſe preſent Entertainments as a Stone does through a watery Medium till at length it happily arrives to its own proper Center. They may indeed enjoy ſo much of this or that particular Object as to deſire no more of it; but then their Deſires are ſtill running out after ſome other Objects; and when they have obtain'd and enjoy'd them too, they ſtill remain as diſſatisfy'd as before. *The Eye is not ſatisfy'd with ſeeing, nor the Ear with hearing*, ſays * *Solomon*. Tho' they are the wideſt of all the Senſes, and can take in more abundance with leſs Satiety, and ſerve more immediately for the Support of the Rational Soul; yet a Man's Eye-ſtrings may even crack through Vehemency of Poring, and his Ears be filled with

* Eccleſ. 1. 8.

with all the Variety of the moſt exquiſite Sounds, Harmonies, and Lectures in the World; and after all, his Soul within him be as greedy to ſee and hear more as it was at firſt. Hence ariſe Diſtractions of Heart, anxious and carking Thought for to Morrow; Rovings and Inquiſitions of the Soul after infinite Varieties of earthly things; ſparklings of the Luſt; Swarms of Endleſs Thoughts; thoſe Ebbings and Flowings, thoſe Tempers and Æſtuations of that Sea of Corruption in the Heart of Man, becauſe the Soul can find no Center here to reſt upon, nothing large enough for the Entertainments of ſo ample and ſo endleſs a Gueſt. In ſhort, We may (I confeſs) refreſh our ſelves with the Excellencies of the Creatures, and diſcover ſuch variety of Sweetneſs and Beauty in their Natures, as will plentifully entertain us with delightſome Speculations. But for pure Reſt and Peace, for plenary Acquieſcence and Termination of Deſires, 'tis no where (as I have * elſewhere ſhewn at large) to be found within the whole Latitude of the Creation. Nay, This is confirm'd by the ingenuous Confeſſion of One, who was the moſt Experienc'd of all the Sons of *Adam* for Enquiry, the moſt wiſe for Contrivance, the moſt wealthy for compaſſing

* Doctrin of a God, and Provid. Vindicat. & aſſert. p. 36, 37.

all Earthly Delights: Who, many years sifted out the finest Flour, and tortur'd Nature to extract the most exquisite Spirits, the purest Quintessence, which all the Varieties of earthly Delights could afford. Who yet at last had nothing better to say of them all, than that they were Vanity and Vexation of Spirit. *I have seen* (* says he) *all the works that are done under the Sun, and behold All is Vanity and Vexation of Spirit.*

* Eccles. 1. 14.

This (I say) is our case with all these present Entertainments: They smilingly offer themselves to our Embraces, and deceitfully promise us all the Satisfaction our Hearts can desire. But when we have once taken them into our Arms, they immediately fade and pine away in our very Embraces, and leave the Soul weeping and disconsolate for her unexpected Disappointment.

But now 'tis quite otherwise with the things that are above. No sooner does the Soul pass from her dark Prison into the Mansions of Light and Glory; but in that Paradise of God, where happy Spirits sit down by immortal Streams, entertaining themselves with Songs of Love and Praise, she finds perfect Satisfaction and Termination of all her desires. Having

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joyn'd herſelf to God (to ſpeak Platonically) as a Center to a Center, ſhe reſts there with full Acquieſcence and Complacency. Whatſoever is beautiful and glorious, whatſoever is fair, lovely, and harmonious in the Face of Nature, ſhe contemplates in the moſt eminent manner in her Beloved, the Unfoldings of whoſe Beauty diſcover to her ſuch Cauſes of Joy, of Tranſports, of Extaſies and Raviſhment of Spirit, that all her Faculties overflow with Joy and Everlaſting Gladneſs. Which brings me to my Second Conſideration, which is to ſhew, that 'tis our Intereſt, as well as Duty, to ſet our Affections on things above, not on things on the Earth, becauſe They only are permanent, ſure, and certain; whereas all things here are frail, ſhort, and uncertain.

2. Now tho' we were born with all the Advantages of an healthful Body and of a chearful Spirit, and bleſt with all the Circumſtances of Succeſs and Fortune: yet when we have compaſs'd all our Projects, when we are happy (if poſſible) to the utmoſt of our Capacities, when all things conſpire to compleat our Felicity, the moſt pleaſant Proſpect we can take from this higheſt pitch of humane Happineſs, is the gloomy Regions of approaching Death and

Darkneſs. The Fatal Sword hangs perpetually over our Heads, and tho' it may poſſibly hover there for ſome time, it cannot be long, before it fall, and cut off the Thread of Life, and ſo put a final period to all our Mirth and Happineſs. 'Tis the irreverſible Decree of Heaven, that after a ſhort, muſhroom Life, we return into Duſt and Silence; and that, when we have floated up and down a few Minutes upon the troubleſome Waves of this tempeſtuous World, we diſappear, and Sink back into the grave and bottomleſs Dungeons of Oblivion. Nay perhaps whilſt we are dancing upon theſe reſtleſs Waves, ſome violent Accident may prevent the Work of Nature, and ſuddenly cruſh the Bubble into its original Nothing. In ſhort, All thoſe Differences, which now ſo much diſtinguiſh the ſeveral ſorts of Men, muſt ere long expire, and the Aſhes of the Deform'd and Beautiful, of the Learn'd and Ignorant, of the Honourable and Baſe, lie intermingled together. The Crowns of Kings, and the Shackles of the Priſoners, the Robes of Princes and the Rags of Beggars, the Gallants Bravery and the Peaſants Ruſſet, the Statiſts Policy, the Courtiers Luxury, the Souldiers Gallantry, and the Scholars Curioſity, muſt

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all, ere long, be laid aside in the Melancholy Retirements of the Grave. What then is there in all this World that deserves our Care? What worthy the Thoughts, the Love, the Embraces of an immortal Soul? Alas! were these Things never so good and satisfactory in themselves, yet this single Consideration of their Shortness and Uncertainty, would (like a Moth fretting a Garment) cause all their Beauty to consume away, and constrain the Wise and thinking Few to pronounce them Vanity.

Ἐν τοσαύτῃ ῥύσει τῆς τε οὐσίας, καὶ τοῦ χρόνου, καὶ τῆς κινήσεως, καὶ τῶν κινουμένων, τί ποτ' ἐστὶ τὸ ἐπιτιμησθῆναι, ἢ τὸ ὅλως σπουδασθῆναι δυνάμενον, οὐδ' ἐπινοῶ. M. Anton. ad Stips. lib. 5. c. 8. p. 135.

But as the Things that are seen, these present Entertainments of Sense, are Temporal; so the Things that are not seen, those Glories, Crowns, and Scepters, that expect us in the other World are Eternal. Heaven is an Eternal Sabbath, the Saints Everlasting Rest. Their Inheritance is not only Undefil'd, but incorruptible likewise, and such, as fadeth not away. There they Labour no more, Sin no more, Sorrow no more; but, secure of the Everlasting Fruition of those Unutterable Glories bask themselves in the pleasant Rivers of overflowing Felicity. Their Crowns are set with the invaluable and sparkling Diamonds of Immortality; Their Glory is immarcessible, and suffers no Eclipse; and they follow the Lamb in white

white Robes, and ſhine like the Stars in the Firmament for Ever and Ever. O come then, thou bright and Everlaſting Day, and break in upon theſe ſad benighted Souls of ours! Put an End to this toilſome, this wearifome State, and take us into the poſſeſſion of thine own Reſt and Peace; that theſe ſuperficial, fallacious Pleaſures may never beguile us more, but we ſecurely Sabbatize in the Kingdom of God, the Eternal Comprehenſions of Celeſtial Glory.

3. 'Tis our Intereſt, as well as Duty, to ſet our Affection on things above, not on things on the Earth, becauſe They only refine and ſpiritualize our Nature, widen and enlarge our Faculties, and ſo fit and prepare us for the ſpiritual and abſtracted Entertainments of an immortal and Divine Life; whereas all things here degravate and weigh down the Soul, reach out to her that Cup of Oblivion, which makes her forget her own Nature and Excellencies, and inglorioufly to take up with the Enjoyments of Brutes. When the deluded Soul is once taken Captive by the ſuperficial, falſegloſſing Excellencies of temporary Objects, and ſuffers herſelf to be lull'd aſleep in the Lap of ſenſual Enjoyments, they immediately ſpoil her of her Strength and

and Beauty, and betray her into the hands of her immortal Enemies. They entirely ſhave off thoſe golden Locks, which rendred her at once invincible and comely, and by clipping her radiant and ſublimating Wings, confine her to the lower Regions of Senſe and Materiality. Nay, by the deluſive Strains of their Magical Songs they ſo effectually ſteal away and inchant her Affections, that ſhe grows utterly unmindful of her Relations above, and reſigns herſelf wholly to their unequal Embraces. Her noble Aſpirations, which could eaſily aſcend above the utmoſt Limits of corruptible Nature into the boundleſs Habitations of immortal Bleſſedneſs, like heavy terrene Exhalations, ariſe now no higher than the Regions of Senſe; and all the rational and delicious Entertainments of abſtracted Contemplations give way to the vile, impure ſuggeſtions of an earthly, ſenſual, and brutiſh Imagination. In ſhort, They ſo vaſtly decline her from her true and natural Point, and ſink her ſo low into the loathſome Faculencies of the material World, that (as tho' 'twas the Perfection of her Nature to be ſubſervient to the Body, and uninterruptedly to enjoy the beggarly Delights and Gratifications of Senſuality) ſhe openly Proſecutes the exalted

alted Entertainments of the Divine Life with all the Expreſſions of Rudeneſs and Diſdain, and ſhameleſly chooſeth that for her Portion and Inheritance, which is the particular and diſcriminating Curſe of the Serpent: *Upon thy Belly ſhalt thou go, and Duſt ſhalt thou eat all the days of thy life.*

But now as the ſcanty diſproportionate Enjoyments of Senſe naturally debaſe and impoveriſh the Soul, ſo do the Contemplation of ſpiritual Objects unconceivably improve and enlarge all her Faculties. As when *Moſes* convers'd with his moſt glorious Maker, and the attending Myriads of Holy Ones upon Mount *Sinai*, he deriv'd upon his Face ſuch Reflexions of their Beauty, ſuch bright and vivid Irradations of their excellent Glory, that the Children of *Iſrael* could not look ſtedfaſtly upon it; ſo when we frequently meditate upon the noble and exalted Beings of the other World, they naturally dilate and expand all our Faculties, ſublimate and brighten our enlarged Spirits, till they appear like thoſe of their own Company, Beautiful and Majeſtick, as the Sons of the Morning. They raiſe ſuch importunate and inſatiable Deſires, ſuch towring and ſeraphick Aſpirations in the Soul, as will acquieſce and terminate only in the bliſsful Enjoyments of

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the Supreme Good, the everlasting Fruition of his incomprehensible Glory. The best Enjoyments, the noblest Entertainments this World can afford, savour of nothing now but Dung and Filthiness to their Palates, which can relish nothing but the Dew of Heaven, the spiritual Manna, the Food of Angels, those pure and divine Joys which refresh the Saints above for evermore. And thus whereas the Degenerate Soul, which is clogg'd with the Propensions of the Animal Life, needs no angry Cherub with a flaming Sword to keep her unhallow'd hands from off the Tree of Life, her own corrupted Nature (as the excellent Pythagorean and Academick have long since observ'd) being utterly uncapable of the Joys of Heaven; this enlarg'd and purify'd Soul, on the contrary, is duly qualify'd for the noblest Entertainments of that exalted State. From the Suitableness and Congruity of her Faculties with the Objects, she will sweetly centre upon those intellectual Pleasures, and most amply spend all her Powers upon the Infinite and Essential Goodness, as upon her most proper Object, the End of her Being, the Author and Finisher of her Happiness and Glory. In a word, She will go away from her earthly Tabernacle ready tun'd to the Musick

ſick of Heaven, in the firſt moment of her Entrance skilfully ſtrike in with the Quires of Angels, and harmoniouſly raiſe her Voice to the Songs of *Sion*.

Thus you have my Reaſons which enforce the Exhortation in the Text. I ſhall now briefly deduce from them two or three practical Inferences, and conclude.

1. Then, You have ſeen how vain, inſufficient, empty, and unſatisfying all the Profits and Pleaſures of this World are: that the whole Earth, tho' chang'd into one Paradiſe, would not be able to yield the Soul Satisfaction; and likewiſe if it could, that ſhe is not certain of enjoying it one minute. Let this Conſideration then teach us to pray with the Excellent * Philoſopher, That we may know our ſelves, and not devote our Exalted Nature to the empty Gayeties of theſe momentary Bubbles; but apply our Minds conſtantly πρὸς τὰ ὄντως ὄντα, to the glorious Realities of the other World, the ſubſtantial Entertainments of Life and Immortality. Let it remind us (I ſay) not to truſt in theſe uncertain Riches, theſe broken Reeds, theſe ſlender Stays of Vanity, theſe Impertinencies, Dreams, and Nothings; but to lay up our Treaſures in Heaven, thoſe ſecure and everlaſting Store-houſes, where no Thief

* *Vide Simplicii Orationem apud Jamblichum ad calcem notarum. Edit. Ox. eandem videas ad finem Epicteti.*

Thief approacheth, nor Moth corrupteth, nor Death, which blasts all our Enjoyments here, interposeth; but we shall reign Kings and Princes with our God for ever and ever. Let it warn us to be perpetually mindful of our Mortality, and humbly and diligently to wait all the days of our appointed time, till our Change come. In a word, Let it oblige us to forget those things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, to press with all possible Vehemence towards the Mark for the prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus.

2. You have seen how great and glorious the Rewards that expect us in the other World are; that they are both proportion'd to the utmost Capacity of the Soul, and also will be enjoy'd to all Eternity. Do not you then long for this happy state? and sigh and desire ardently with St. *Paul* to be dissolv'd, and to be with Christ? Here (as says a Blessed Author) you have hard Working-days, sore Labour and Travel under the Sun. The Devil assaults you, the World hates you, your own evil Hearts many times distress you, and crazy Bodies discourage you. We are all here clouded with Sin and Misery, and ah! our Vileness is upon us. Let us then bear up our Souls upon

* My Father, Mr. *John Gregory*, in his posthumous Discourse of the Morality of the Sabbath, *pag.* 101.

upon the loftieſt Wing of Divine Contemplation, and follow our Aſcending Lord above this Darkneſs and miſerable Habitations into the radiant Manſions of his Fathers Houſe, the Kingdom of Glory. Let us meditate Day and Night upon that bleſſed time, when we ſhall have our Feet upon the Top of Mount *Sion*, and rejoyce in the Felicity of his Choſen, the unfolded and eſſential Glories of his Divine Countenance, which are too bright for our mortal Faculties, and which none can ſee and live. When we ſhall give Thanks with his Inheritance, the bleſſed Societies of Saints and Angels, and everlaſtingly enjoy the delicious Repaſts of Anthems and Alleluiahs: in ſhort, upon the infinite Tranſports and Raviſhments of the Soul in the ſecure and everlaſting Fruition of the Divine Love, upon the mutual Endearments and Careſſes of Immortal Spirits, and upon all thoſe glorious things which are ſpoken by him who made and fully underſtands them, of the City of God. Let us frequently and ſeriouſly (I ſay) contemplate theſe things, and they will moſt aſſuredly ſo influence our Wills, and fan the Flame of our Affections, that we ſhall become perfectly ἀναισθητοι, dead to our ſelves, and to all the luſcious Reliſhes of the ſenſual Nature,

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continually tending upwards with importunate Reaches towards heavenly Objects. Then we shall be sufficiently encouraged to take up the Cross of Christ, and willingly and chearfully undergo all the Afflictions and Tribulations of this Life; well knowing, that the Sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compar'd with the Glory that shall be revealed in us; this light Affliction, which is but for a moment, working for us καθ' ὑπερβολὴν εἰς ὑπερβολὴν αἰώνιον βάρος δόξης, an infinitely more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory.

Lastly, As our future Happiness proceeds from the Vision of God, so you have seen, that without Holiness no Man can see him. Let this then excite us to form and fashion the Frame of our Minds into a Likeness and Affinity with our Blessed Maker. Let it oblige us to prepare our selves for the Intuition of his Beauty, to purify ourselves as he is pure, and to purge, refine, and spiritualize our Nature, that we may be qualify'd for the Possession of our proper Centre, our home and native Region, the Highest Heaven. Let it lead our awaken'd Souls to the Divine Goodness and Philanthropy for the Regulation of

their disorderly and tumultuous Appetites, and induce them humbly and intensly to pray at the Throne of Grace, that they may perfect Holiness in the Fear of God. For when we thus sincerely desire to shake our selves from the Dust, to arise, and put on our beautiful Garments, and to see the King in his Beauty, the Glory of the Lord will be revealed to us, and we shall certainly behold the Excellency of our God. As the Bridegroom rejoyceth over the Bride, solacing himself in the ardent and dear Reciprocations of her Love, so will our God rejoyce over us. He will be in the midst of us, he will save us, he will rejoyce over us with Joy: He will rest in his Love, he will rejoyce over us with Singing. He will take away all our Dross, and for his Name's sake purifie and cleanse the Corruptions of our Nature, until the Righteousness thereof go forth as Brightness, and the Salvation thereof as a Lamp that burneth. In a word, He will vouchsafe us the most gracious Visitations and Elapses of his Holy Spirit, and never leave letting himself down into us, till he has quite loosen'd us from Sin and from our selves, and wrought us up into such a blessed Uniformity with the Divine Nature, as

will

will make us meet for his amiable Dwellings, the City of Righteousness, where we shall joyfully mention the loving Kindnesses of the Lord, and be for ever delighted with the Abundance of his Glory.

Which God, of his Infinite Mercy, grant, &c.

Ser. 4.

HEBREWS ii. 3.

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation?

IN handling these Words, I shall endeavour to shew, 1. The Greatness of the Salvation wrought for us by Christ; and 2. Our Inexcusableness and the intolerable Aggravations of our Guilt and Punishment, if we neglect it. That so either common Gratitude in reflecting upon the infinite Condescensions of Divine Love may draw us, or at least the Terrors of the Lord may affright us into Obedience. For how shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation?

I. I am to shew the greatness of the Salvation wrought for us by Christ. And this appears,

1. From the Consideration of the Greatness and Majesty of the Person undertaking it. Now 'twas not any one of the Patriarchs, who were burning and shining Lights

Lights in their Generations. 'Twas not *Moſes*, nor one of the Prophets, by whom in times paſt he ſpake unto the Fathers; But when the Fulneſs of the time was come God deals with us, as the Lord of the Vineyard did with his Husbandmen; laſt of all ſending even his own Son to be his Ambaſſadour to Mankind. His own Son, from whom by the Spirit all theſe Divine Teachers, which from the Beginning of the World to his Birth went before him in the Fleſh, receiv'd their Power and Commiſſion. Of whom *Moſes* and the Prophets were only Types, Fore-runners and Shadows; Figures, Miniſters and Subſtitutes, to prepare and enable the World by degrees to receive this great Myſtery of Godlineſs, God manifeſted in the Fleſh: this laſt and univerſal Declaration of Life and Immortality brought to light in his Goſpel. His own Son, who is his only-begotten, Co-eſſential and Co-eternal with himſelf, the Heir of all things, the Lord of Glory, the very Brightneſs of his Father's Glory, the Expreſs Image of his Perſon, full of Grace and Truth. His own Son, * by whom were all things made, Viſible and Inviſible. Theſe moſt glorious and exalted Sons of the Morning, who when the Foundations of the World were laid,

* Col. 1. 16, 17.

sang melodiously together, and shouted for Joy, as well as the Beasts of the Field. All Thrones, Dominions, Principalities and Powers in Heaven and Earth, as well as the subordinate Classes of inferiour Beings; and to this Hour upholds them all by the Word of his Power. This is the Person that comes to Save us. Even He, † who subsisted in the Form or Nature of God, and therefore thought it no Robbery, but his inviolable Right, to be Equal with God, emptied himself of no Reputation, but took upon him the Form or Nature of a Servant, and is made in the Likeness of Men.

† Phil. 2. 6, 7.

Deus Homunculi obiit sub imagine servi.

God himself, I say, even the High and Lofty One, that inhabiteth Eternity, and whose Name is Great, Wonderful and Holy; the Lord *Jehovah*, with whom is Everlasting Strength, in very deed bows the Heavens, and comes down to dwell among Men. Well then might the Multitude of Heaven, the Quires of Angels who long desir'd to see the Mystery of this Day clear in the Birth of this great Prince, with Songs and Alleluiahs. Well might one of them, adorn'd with the Brightness and Similitude of a Star, call the Eastern Princes,

Princes, the great and Learned *Magi*, as Emblems of his Future Conquests over the Princes and Learned Sages of the Heathen World, to do him Obeisance; and others, wing'd with Joy and Triumph carry those glad Tidings to the humble Shepherds, and send them likewise, as the First-fruits of his own People, to pay their Homage to their Lord. For had the heavenly Host been silent, the Lowest Class of Beings, the very senseless and inanimate Parts of impatient Nature, had speechless found a Voice to have told us, That unto us a Son was born, unto us a Child was given, whose Government is upon his Shoulders, and whose Goings forth from Everlasting.

But now how miserable and wretched was our Captivity which the Arm of Omnipotence only could lead captive! How thick and dismal the Darkness we were in, which the irresistable Rays of the Sun of Righteousness only could disperse and scatter? How weighty and insupportable that Wrath which nothing could appease, but the adequate Condescensions of an Infinite Love? Where were all those spotless Beauties of the Upper World? Those kind, compassionate Spirits, who seem to make it a great Part of their Heaven, to relieve us here below? Where all those bright

Squadrons of exalted Seraphims whose Names are renown'd and glorious for their transcendent Love in the Habitations of Men here, as well as in the Mansions of Glory? Could not these unstain'd, pure, and undefiled Images of our heavenly Father, These faultless, innocent, and unblameable Beings, who continually surround his Throne with Anthems of Praise, intercede for, and reconcile the offended Deity to Sinful Man? No, we were such heinous Offenders, that nothing less than God himself, could satisfie for our Faults. These Blessed Spirits could only in strains of Sorrow lament our Fall, and with a Pity and Concern commensurate to the passive Nature of such happy Beings, expect the Final determination of Infinite Wisdom, Goodness and Justice.

I know many Learned Men, both Ancient and Modern, are of Opinion, That God might have pardon'd the Sins of Mankind without any Satisfaction made to his Justice, *Solo nutu, & jussu, & voluntate*, merely by the unexceptionable Prerogative of his Soveraign Will and Power; and that 'twas only to shew his great Concern for the Honour of his Laws, and his everlasting Hatred and Detestation of Sin, that he humbled his own Son to become a propitiation

pitiation for it. Far be it from me, to intrench upon the Divine Omnipotence, or impiously to say to his Goodness, what himself does to the Sea; Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther, and here shall thy Operations be staid. Yet I think, we may venture to affirm, that these Excellent Persons seem to be so enamour'd with the Beauty, of that lovely Attribute, his Mercy, that they have hardly vouchsaf'd to cast so much as one glance upon his Justice. Mercy, I acknowledge, is his Favourite, his darling Excellence, the very Flower and Beauty, as I may so say, of his Nature, in which his Soul takes most Delight and Complacency. And this consider'd alone, might have remitted the whole Debt without any payment at all, or at least have accepted the Satisfaction of an Angel. But then I consider on the other hand, that Justice is as Essential to him as Mercy, and that as the one is infinite, so is the other too. Now Justice (you know) demands the whole Debt should be discharg'd, and the Sinner not releas'd till he has one way or other paid the uttermost Farthing. But which, I pray, of all the Angels, is sufficient for these things? or where shall we find, among all those Finite, tho' glorious, Beings, a Sa-

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our able to satisfie Infinite Justice for the Sins of the whole World? The Blessed Jesus look'd and saw there was none to help, and wonder'd there was no Intercessor; therefore his own Arm brought Salvation to him, and his Righteousness it sustain'd him. What I say, none of all Created Beings, none of the heavenly Powers, those Magisterial and Master-pieces of his Creation, could Undertake, the Son of God himself humbly descends from his Throne of Glory down to his Foot-stool, to perform and accomplish. Welcome then, thrice welcome, Blessed Jesu, into thine own World. Welcome to the unhappy Dwellings of forlorn and helpless Man. May the sense of thine infinite Love enlarge thy Dominions, and cause all People, Nations, and Languages, to rise up, and call thee Blessed. May all Nations, whom thou hast made come and worship thee, and glorifie thy Name; For thou art Great, and dost wonderous things, thou art God alone.

Now then, my Brethren, let us not so ill requite this stupendous Condescension of the Son of God, as to debase him (as some impious and ungrateful Wretches do) beneath the Condition he humbled himself unto. Let us not, I say, for his infinite

Love

Love cast Dirt in his Face; or, because he vouchsaf'd to assume the Infirmities of Humane Nature, despoil him (as much as we can) of the Glory and Majesty of the Divine. Though his Beauty was benighted under a Cloud, there was Form and Comeliness enough in him, that we should desire him. The unconverted * Jew himself will tell us, that his Divinity, like the Sun shining through a Cloud, gave such Illustration and Testimony to all his Actions, that 'twas hardly lawful to call him a Man. And now he has run his Race, and finished his Course; the Cloud is remov'd, and the Mists all scatter'd before the prevailing Sun. The Incarnate God shines forth in his full Glory and Triumph; yea, he is now altogether lovely. 'Tis the highest Repast of Angels, and the peculiar Entertainment of Glorified Spirits, to behold, admire, and praise his excellent Greatness; and when our enlarged Souls shall fly away to the same blissful Mansions, and be admitted to the Comprehensions of an intuitive Beatitude, they shall with equal Satisfaction contemplate his Divine Beauty, and as skilfully tune their Harps to his Praises as they. Let us therefore, in the mean time, lay our Hand upon our Mouth, and with all due Prostration both of Body and

* *Joseph. de Antiq. Jud.* l. 18. c. 4.

Mind

Mind adore this great Myſtery of Goodneſs, this aſtoniſhing Miracle of the Divine Mercy and Condeſcention, which, though above the adequate Comprehenſion of our Reaſon, is put beyond all poſſibility of Diſtruſt; being moſt amply confirm'd to us by the concurrent and infallible Teſtimony of God, Angels, and Men.

At his Baptiſm and Transfiguration, you know, he was proclaim'd by a Voice from Heaven, to be the Beloved Son of God, in whom he was well pleas'd. And again, when he bringeth in his Firſt-begotten into the World, he commands, that this Exinanition of himſelf (this Obſcuration of his Eſſential Glory under the Veil of Humane Fleſh) may not diminiſh one Ray from the Honour of his Divine Majeſty; but that all the Potentates in Heaven and Earth fall down and worſhip him. *Worſhip him*, † ſays he, *all ye Gods, all ye Angels and Thrones in Heaven, all ye Kings and Judges of the Earth.* The holy Angels, with their uſual Chearfulneſs, obey'd the Royal Orders. They humbly ador'd the holy Child *Jeſus*, and ſtood ready, through all the Periods of his Life, to Serve and Worſhip him. St. *Peter*, though he ſaw him not ſo clearly as theſe Bleſſed Spirits, generouſly confeſs'd, that he was Chriſt the Son of

† Pſal. 97. 7.

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the Living God; and he receiv'd this Confirmation from the Mouth of our Lord himself, That Flesh and Blood had not reveal'd it unto him, but his Father only, which is in Heaven. Nay (to the everlasting Shame and Confusion of the unbelieving Sons of Men) the Devils themselves have ever subscrib'd to this Article. They knew and confess'd him here on Earth, and still believe and tremble. The over-aw'd and trembling || Oracle plainly confess'd to the *Roman* Emperour at his Birth, that though he appear'd under all the disadvantageous Circumstances of Humanity and Weakness, He was the Soveraign Lord and King of the blest Beings above; * which was afterwards confirm'd by a whole Legion of unclean Spirits, when in the Man possess'd they joyntly lifted up their Voices to him with a Jesus thou Son of God Most High. But to what purpose, I say, was all this? or why all this Noise and Ostentation, had he not been the Son of God in another and more excellent manner than were any of the Sons of Men, who either liv'd with him, or that went before him, had there not been something in it extraordinary, that entitled him to so sublime and divine a Privilege?

|| *Vid. Suidam in August.*

* Luke 8. 28.

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Angels, Kings, and Prophets (I confeſs) are frequently call'd the Sons of God. They have a larger Participation of his Power, or a Communication of more ſpecial Grace than is indulg'd and granted to his other Children; but yet their Honour and Dignity fall infinitely ſhort of that of Jeſus the Son of God. For to which of the Angels ſaid he at any time, Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee? Or who is he amongſt all thoſe exalted Sons of the Moſt High, whom the Father advanc'd to ſit at his own Right-hand till his Enemies are made his Footſtool? *David* (you know) was a King, and yet he calls him Lord; and *John the Baptiſt*, though he was more than a Prophet, was never by Angels, Men, or Devils acknowledg'd to be properly the Son of God: no; theſe are the high Prerogatives of our Lord Chriſt Jeſus: to him alone belong the moſt glorious and ſupereminent Titles of his own Son, his only Son, his only Begotten, and the Heir of all things. So that in all things (I ſay) he has the Preheminence.

But the Scriptures (if poſſible) ſpeak plainer yet. They not only inſtruct by natural and ſecondary Illations and Conſequences, but alſo (to prevent all Cavils and Diſputes) are careful in many places

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to assert this Truth as clearly, and as expressly, as Words can speak. * St. *Thomas* believes and confesseth to him, that he is his Lord and God; and those who should afterwards inherit the same Faith, are pronounced Blessed. The Beloved † Disciple is positive, that the Word was God; and in the Close of his first Epistle speaking of Jesus, (to shew against an Objection, which he rightly foresaw would be afterwards urg'd against the Christians, that they might safely worship him, without any Fear or Danger of that Idolatry which the Heathens were guilty of in worshipping their *Daemons*,) This, says he, is, not *Deus factus*, a made God, a God by Office, not by Nature; but ὁ ἀληθινὸς θεὸς, the True God. The Learn'd * Apostle adds, that this Second Man is the Lord from heaven, and God manifested in the Flesh, and again, (most blasphemously, if not truly; this being that particular Doxology which is due only to *Jehovah*, the one Supreme Eternal God of *Israel*) ὁ Θεὸς πάντων εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, God over all blessed for Ever and Ever. Nay, (not to mention the many Repetitions of this most glorious Doxology to him in other places of Scripture) This is that good Confession our Lord himself made before his Judge.

* Joh. 20. 28, 29.

† Joh. 1. 1.

* 1 Cor. 15. 87. 1 Tim. 3. 16. Rom. 9. 5.

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He had all along, to the Rage and Amazement of his Enemies, held his peace; shewing by his Silence, that he despis'd all their Accusations as certain and apparent Calumnies. But no sooner is urg'd to determine this Point, but he opens his Mouth, and decides the matter. *I adjure thee by the living God*, * says the High-Priest, *that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ*, the Son of God. Jesus, after their modest way of Affirmation, saith unto him, *Thou hast said*. Or, as St. *Mark* more positively, *Jesus said, I am*. 'Tis certain, the High-Priest understood him not in that Vulgar Sense wherein Great and Righteous Persons, Kings and Prophets, are call'd the Sons of God; but that he affirm'd himself to be in the Literal, Proper, and Natural Signification of the words: For otherwise he could not, upon the account of this Confession, have charg'd him with Blasphemy, nor consequently the Council have voted him to be guilty of Death. Thus too in the Fifth of St. *John* he tells the *Jews* plainly, that God is πατηρ ἰδιος, his own Father; making himself thereby (as they rightly concluded) to be Equal with God. And in another Conference with them in the Tenth of that Evangelist, He not only owns himself to be the Christ, and the Son of

* Mat. 26. 63, 64.

of God in the moſt proper ſence; but adds farther, that He and his Father are One: One, not in Will only, but in Eſſence, Glory, Honour, and Power. I am ſure the *Jews* underſtood him thus: for knowing, that none could call himſelf the proper and natural Son of God, who muſt not aſſert himſelf likewiſe to be God, and allowing him to be nothing more than a mere Man, they again tax him with Blaſphemy, and go about to ſtone him. *I and my Father*, ſays our Lord, *are One*. Then the *Jews* took up Stones again to ſtone him. Jeſus anſwer'd them Many good Works have I ſhew'd you from my Father; for which of thoſe Works do ye ſtone me? The *Jews* anſwer'd him, ſaying, For a good work we ſtone thee not, but for Blaſphemy, and becauſe that thou, being a Man, makeſt thy ſelf God. The *Jews*, I ſay, in theſe places accuſe him of calling himſelf the Son of God in the moſt proper Senſe, and conſequently of making himſelf alſo very God. And yet our Lord is ſo far from traverſing the Indictment, or repelling the Crimination, that in Verſ. 38. he confirms their Logick, and then leaves them in this Opinion, which certainly he could never have done without infinite Derogation from the Honour of the Divine Majeſty,

and downright blaſphemy, had he not really been what they apprehended he ſaid he was: the Proper, Natural, and Only Begotten Son of God.

Thus, I ſay, is the Divinity of our Lord put beyond all poſſibility of Diſtruſt, being preach'd to all the World by Angels, Prophets, and Apoſtles; Proclaim'd more than once from Heaven by the God of Truth, the Eternal Father of Angels and men; and alſo moſt poſitively aſſerted in a publick Aſſembly by our Lord himſelf, who, as the * Holy Ghoſt bears him witneſs, *did no Sin, neither was guile found in his mouth.* What need we then, My Brethren, any farther witneſs? Or how is it poſſible for any Man, who rightly underſtands the weight of Divine Teſtimony, to call it in queſtion? Such Men as † *Euſebius* has long ſince obſerv'd, muſt be more wiſe than their Maker, more knowing, and more intelligent, even than God that made them. Thoſe inſpir'd and infallible Witneſſes, the Prophets and Apoſtles, were not ſo knowing; and the moſt intelligent of all the Heavenly Spirits, the Cherubims themſelves, if compar'd to them, are found wanting. The Church of Chriſt, in all Ages, has unhappily been overſpread with the thick, uncomfortable darkneſs of Igno-

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* 1 Pet. 2. 22.

† *Hiſt. Eccleſ.* lib. 5. cap. 28.

nance and Error; and These Men alone have had the inestimable Privilege of enjoying the happy *Goshen*, the Dwellings of Light, the glorious Habitations of Wisdom and Knowledge. For if after the complicated, irrefragable Testimony of so many Infallible Witnesses, the Belief and Confession of the Church be requir'd in this Matter, She has in all Ages believ'd and confess'd it. This is that Faith, says the * Synod of *Antioch*, which we have receiv'd from the Beginning, and which the holy Catholick Church preserves pure and undefil'd; having deriv'd it by a constant and uninterrupted Succession, even unto this Day, from the Blessed Apostles themselves. And † some truly excellent and Learned Divines of our own have shewn at large the Truth of this Assertion, from the particular Writings and Monuments of the Primitive Fathers: who, as well before as after the Council of *Nice*, with one Heart and one Voice confess and maintain the Divinity and Eternal Generation of the Son of God. These well-grounded and pious Souls could not be laugh'd or ridicul'd by the Scoffs and Jests, the Taunts and Sarcasms of their Learned and Witty Adversaries; nor frighted by the fearful Appearances of Torture and Persecution,

* *Concil. Paris.* tom. 1. pag. 844.

† *Vid: as Bulli Defensionem Fidei Nicenæ, & Whitbii tractatum de verâ Christi Deitate,* sect. 2.

out of their Truſt and Confidence in the Holy Jeſus; but notwithſtanding all the Imputations of Folly and Madneſs from the invidious *Trypho*, a ſcoffing *Lucian*, a violent *Celſus*, and a malicious *Julian*, they continually call'd upon him in the time of Trouble, and (as * *Pliny* tells *Trajan*) ſang Praiſes to him as to the God of their Salvation. Neither did they only thus bravely contend for the Faith againſt the violent Incurſions of the wild Boar out of the Foreſt; the Menaces and blaſphemous Aſſaults of their profeſs'd Enemies, the *Jews* and *Gentiles*; but alſo were infinitely careful to ſecure it from the Wiles and Stratagems of the little Foxes; thoſe falſe Teachers, that crept in amongſt them, and under the ſpecious Pretences of Reaſon and Revelation continually endeavour'd to ſpoil the Lords Vineyard. No ſooner did any Heretick dare to impugn or invalidate this Doctrine, but he was immediately diſown'd by all the Faithful, and Anathematiz'd or caſt out of the Church as a ravenous Wolf, who deſign'd only to devour and tear in pieces the Lord's Flock, which is demonſtratively Evident from that Claſs of Hereticks, *Ebion*, *Theodotus*, *Artemas*, *Paulus Samoſatenus*, and *Photinus*. In ſhort, *Socinus* himſelf confeſſeth, that the whole

* *Epiſt. l.* 10. *Ep.* 97.

whole Stream of Antiquity runs against him; and, that of all the Primitive Fathers and Councils, there is not so much as one that any way countenanceth his Opinion. So that you see, from all hands, that unless with a truly Satanical Pride we exalt our selves above all that is called God, and flatly give Heaven and Earth, God, Angels, and pious Men the Lye to their face, and side only with Jews, Turks, and Pagans, we must acknowledge the Blessed Jesus to be in very deed no other than the Only-Begotten Son of the Most High, the Maker of All things, the King of Glory, *Alpha* and *Omega*, the First of Beings, and the Last of Ends, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

Thus then does the Greatness of our Salvation appear from the Greatness and Majesty of the Person undertaking it. It does so

2. From the Greatness and Unconceivableness of those Sufferings, whereby he did accomplish it. Some, indeed, lessen the Sufferings of our Lord, by thinking he had the Comprehension of Blessedness, the Supports of actual Glory in the midst of all his Torments; that even then he did behold the Face of God, and communicate in Glory. But in answer to Men of these

Thoughts, I consider with the Excellent Bishop * *Taylor*,

* *Great Exemplar*, pag. 413, 414.

1. That though the two Natures of Christ were knit by a mysterious Union to one Person, yet the Natures still retain'd their incommunicable Properties; so that as the Divine Nature could not by vertue of this Union derive upon it self the Infirmities of the Humane, so neither did the Humane partake in all Influences of the Deificities of the Divine: these indeed being essentially in God, but to Man communicated without Necessity, and by an extraordinary Dispensation. Tho' therefore, as God, he is omniscient, and knows every thing; yet that, as Man, he was ignorant as many things, seeking Fruit upon the Fig-tree when the time of Figs was not come, and telling us himself, that he knew not the Day nor the Hour when he should judge the World; and therefore being said to have increas'd in Wisdom and Knowledge. Though, as God, he is from Everlasting, and World without end; yet that, as Man, he had a Beginning in the Circumscriptions of time. Lastly, Though, as God, 'twas impossible for him to suffer, yet that, as Man, he was the Subject of Torment and Misery.

2. That

2. That some Virtues and Excellencies were then in the Soul of Jesus, which are not consistent with a glorify'd State; such as Hope, Holy Desires, and the like: All which having their Seat in the Soul, do suppose her yet in a state of Pilgrimage; a Condition, that is imperfect, and in order to something beyond what is present, it being impossible (as St. *Paul* observes) for a Man to hope for that which he already sees and enjoys.

3. That this Opinion annuls and destroys the whole Merit of his Sufferings. For the least glympse of Glory, the minutest Ray of Beatifick Vision, out-weighs the greatest Calamities, and infinitely exceeds all that Sum of Pain that can be extracted from the Infelicities of this World. But the holy Scriptures every where assure us, that his Passion upon the Cross was a state of Merit and Work, and that as a Reward of it, he was crown'd with Glory and Immortality. *We see Jesus*, says the * Apostle, *who was made a little lower than the Angels, for the suffering of Death crowned with glory and honour.* And ‖ again, *Christ humbled himself, and became obedient to Death, even the Death of the Cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name which is above every*

* Heb. 2. 9.

‖ Phil. 2. 8, 9.

Name. For his Sufferings (you see) his Name was exalted, his Kingdom glorify'd, and his Humanity advanc'd above all the Orders of Angels. For these he was made the Lord of all the Creatures, the First-fruits of the Resurrection, the Exemplar of Glory, the Prince and Head of the Catholick Church: And therefore since all this was his Recompence, the Reward of his Sufferings, it could not be a necessary Consequence and natural Efflux of the Personal Union of the Godhead with the Humanity.

On the other hand there are who affirm that the Soul of Jesus upon the Cross suffered the Pains of Hell, and all the Torments of the Damn'd; and that without such Sufferings, it is not imaginable he should pay the Price which God's Wrath did demand of us. But the same that disproves the former, does likewise reprehend these latter. For the Hope, which was the support of his Soul in the midst of its Agonies, as it confesseth an Imperfection, that is not consistent with the state of Glory, so does it exclude that Despair which is the Sting and Torment of accursed Souls. Our dearest Lord suffer'd indeed the whole Condition of Humanity, Sin only excepted; and by those sad Pains he endur'd upon

on the Cross, merited Heaven for himself as the Head, and for all his faithful Servants as the Members of his Mystical Body. But yet (I say) we cannot conceive that he was ever under the Amazement of Hell, or that upon the Cross he felt the formal Misery and Spirit of Pain, which is the Portion of Damned Spirits, because 'twas impossible he should despair, and without Despair 'tis impossible there should be a Hell.

But though I can by no means subscribe to this Assertion; yet I think 'tis highly probable, that in the Indication of Degrees and present Anguish the Soul of our Lord upon the Cross might feel a greater Load of Wrath than is incumbent in every instant upon perishing Souls. S. *Paul* tells us, that every Sumer, as such, carries no less a Load about with him than a whole Body of Death. How many Deaths then, and unconceivable Agonies, must the Lamb of God have felt, when (as the Prophet speaks) the Lord laid on him the Iniquities of us all? Certainly the lively Sense of united, concentred Vengeance due to the Sins of the whole World, and the vast and singular Capacity of his Soul who was the Word incarnate, rendred his Sufferings most amazing and insupportable. His Agony was so great, that it compell'd him, for a time,

almost

almost to despair, and sink under its weight. Sure we are, it extorted from him this most bitter Cry, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* And how insupportable must those Sufferings have been, which could appear even to stagger such a Faith, and to eclipse his Assurance of the Presence and Love of his Heavenly Father?

But now again, How great is the Bitterness of that Death, the enduring us from which, brought so much Shame, and Pain, and Amazement upon the Son of God? How unparalleled and unconceivably great that Salvation, in the purchasing of which the Lord of Hosts himself did even bleed and die? The Waters of Bitterness (yes, so) entered his Soul, and the Storms of Death and of his Father's Anger broke him all in pieces. But if this was done in the Green Tree, what without this would have been done in the Dry? If (I say) the Sufferings of our Lord, who was the Son of God and innocent, who was all fair, and had no spot in him, were so sad and lamentable, then how amazing and insupportable had our Portion been without his Atonement, whom Sin had rendred his profess'd Enemies; and, as it were, sound and mark'd out as Fewel for everlasting Burnings? But;

3. The

3. The Greatness of our Salvation appears, in that it frees us from the Bondage and Slavery of the Law. This was a grievous and servile Dispensation, consisting of innumerable Rites and Ceremonies, which had no intrinsick Value in themselves, and are therefore said by God himself to be Statutes that were not good; but were only adapted for a time to the weak Capacities and babe-like Humours of the Jews. Offices and Ceremonies, [illegible] so heavy and burdensome, that the Apostles [illegible] complained, [illegible] Yoke upon their Necks, which [illegible] they nor their Forefathers were [illegible]. But now his Christ takes this [illegible] off our Necks, and made our [illegible] for us into the Liberty of the Sons of God. He does no longer with us as with Children in our Minority, but has delivered us from the Tutorage and Pedagogy of the Law, from the Severity of its Commands, from the exact Punctilio's and Nonsensiveness of its Imposition. The new Moons and Sabbatical Years, the many [illegible] and Purifications stand us in no stand; neither are we oblig'd to long and tedious Journeys to *Jerusalem*, to present our Oblations and Sacrifices at the Temple. Christ our Passover having been sacrificed for us,

and

and the Messiah cut off, all those typical Oblations and Sacrifices must for ever cease, the Shadow give place to the Substance, those Ritual Observances to Natural and Moral Duties, those Carnal Ceremonies to the Spiritual Worship, and that Temporary Dispensation to the Everlasting Covenant of the Gospel. Circumcision now avails no more than Uncircumcision, and 'tis neither Meat nor Drink, but a new Creature only, that commends a Man to God. In a word, our Duty is no longer clogg'd with a company of useless and troublesome Ceremonies, but (like the Sources of the ancient Patriarchs) is more [illegible] and acceptable, more plain and simple, more humane and natural, more becoming the Grandure and Majesty of the Divine Being, and, more agreeable to the Nature of a spiritual and immortal Soul. 'Tis only to be happy the most proper and compendious way; to love our blessed Maker for himself, and our Neighbours for his sake; to visit the Fatherless and Widows in their Afflictions, and to keep our selves unspotted from the World. All which, especially if we consider the extraordinary indulgence of Divine Assistance, which we now enjoy, render our Salvation Great, Wonderful, and Glorious. And so I come

to

to my Fourth Particular, which is to shew the Greatness of our Salvation, from the Consideration of those greater Aids of Divine Grace, those particular Mercies we now enjoy under the Dispensation of the Gospel, whereby we may be freed both from the Guilt and Punishment, and also from the Power and Dominion of Sin.

4. Now the Law only discovers Sin, but affords no degrees of supernatural Power to subdue it; but with the Preaching of the Gospel the Holy Ghost was sent from Heaven, who by illuminating, convincing, and exciting Grace assists Men to perform the Conditions of Salvation, and is promis'd in rich and liberal Supplies to all that humbly and ardently pray for him. God now pours Water upon him that is thirsty, and Floods upon the dry Ground; he pours out his Spirit upon our Seed, and his Blessing upon our Offspring, whereby they may spring up as among the Grass as Willows by the Water-courses. The Law directs to no means for the Expiation of Guilt, but peremptorily and dogmatically denounceth Death to all Offenders. The Soul that sins shall die. But the Gospel delivers us from this terrible Sentence of the Law, and allows a Renovation of the Sinner by Repentance, to which the Necessary

Is. 1. 16, 17, 18. many Pardon of Sin is assured. *Wash ye, make ye clean*, says God by his Evangelical Prophet, *put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well, and though your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like Crimson, they shall be as wool.* God indeed will not pardon those who flatter themselves in their Sins; but they who confess and forsake them shall find Mercy. The Law exacts absolute perfect, uninterrupted Obedience, and for the least Omission or accusing Act, pronounces irrevocable Doom upon the Offender: *Cursed is every one that continues not in all things written in the Law, to do them.* But the Gospel mitigates and allays this Strictness and Severity; calls only for sincere and persevering, though imperfect Obedience, and propounds such merciful Conditions of the Covenant, that upon the performance of them they may plead their Pardon sealed with the Blood of their Redeemer, to be pleaded and crown'd in the Day of Judgment.

And thus whereas the Law worketh nothing but Wrath, being as terrible in its Injunctions, as Death in its Promulgation; the Kingdom of Heaven, the Gospel of Peace, addresseth it self to us after another

ther manner. It speaks to us in a still, small Voice; the whole Tenour of it (you see) running in this gentle strain, Sin no more; Repent and be converted; Come to Christ, and be refresh'd, and find Rest unto your Souls. The Grace of God, I say, which bringeth Salvation, doth thus appear, teaching us, that if the time past of our Lives shall suffice us to have wrought the Will of the Gentiles, and we will now in good earnest renounce all our unkindly and worldly Lusts, and take care for the time to come faithfully to discharge our duty to God, our Neighbour, and Ourselves, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World, Sin shall not have Dominion over us, God having oblig'd himself by express Promise, that he will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able, but that in all our Temptations he will make a way for us to escape, that we may be able to bear them. So that though Sin is not entirely destroy'd, (that being the Privilege of Angels and Souls freed from the Fetters of Mortality) yet (as St. Paul speaks of its Effect, Death) it has lost its Sting, and is only instrumental to the Advancement of the Glory of God, who upon our sincere and hearty Repentance, and Reformation of our Lives, will

pardon

pardon all our past Offences, though never so many and great in themselves; and for those daily Failures, those Sins of Infirmity, those Lapses of Humane Nature, which the Best of Men must more or less be subject to, as long as they lie under the Disadvantages of Mortality, will put them all upon the Score of the Cross.

5. The Greatness of the Salvation wrought for us by Christ, appears, in that he has deliver'd us from that Ignorance and Darkness which the whole World lay in his Coming. Both Jews and Gentiles (I confess) had some Notices or Conceptions of a Future State; but then they were so miserably intricate and obscure, so confused and uncertain, that they were very little better than none at all. Those most Thinking and Learned Pagans, the *Pythagoreans* and *Platonists*, after the most diligent Search and Enquiry into these Matters, could never advance beyond a Probability; all their fine Harangues and rapturous Discourses upon the Immortality of the Soul being Indications rather of their good Wishes, than Demonstrations of its Reality. *Aristotle* not only wavers and fluctuates in his Opinion, but also Problematically disputes against it; though it must be confess'd, that in his Book *De Animâ* he [illegible]

[illegible]

her, without any ſcruple, Eternal and Immortal. But the *Steicks* are as Dogmatical in this Point as in any other. Sometimes indeed they talk like Abſtracted Beings or pure Intelligences, with the nobleſt Flights of Rhetorick and Fancy decyphering the Exalted Happineſs of the Soul when ſhe is entirely looſned from the Clogs of Matter, and freely roves up and down in the pure unmixed Regions of Light and Glory. But then (as though they had lain all this while in a Trance, and had only been entertained with the fantaſtick illuſive Repreſentations of a ſportive Imagination) they for the moſt part peremptorily determine, That Death is not only the Separation of the Soul from the Body, but the utter Diſſolution likewiſe, or Diſſipation of both; there being no more after the Death of a Man than was before his Birth, *viz.* Emptineſs, Inſenſibility, and Darkneſs: Nay, when in their abſtracted Humours they vouchſafe to allow her a Subſiſtence without the Body, 'tis only till the next Univerſal Conflagration, when ſhe and all Created Beings muſt End and Die together. Nor indeed was the Confeſſion of that great Maſter of Morality, *Socrates* himſelf, much better; for, concluding his gallant and moſt excellent Apology before

the *Areopagites*, with ſome glorious Reflections upon the ineſtimable Happineſs of Good Men in the other World, he in the very laſt Words daſh'd all with an open undiſguis'd Acknowledgment of his remaining Doubts and Jealouſies. Ἐγὼ μὲν πολλάκις ἐθέλω τεθνάναι, εἰ ταῦτα ὄζιν ἀληθῆ. Could I be aſſur'd (ſays he a little before) of the Reality of this Bleſſed State, I would gladly die a thouſand times over to enjoy it. But now (my Judges) the time of my Departure is come: 'Tis your Lot to live, and mine to die; which of theſe two is the Better, ἄδηλον παντὶ πλὴν ἢ τῷ θεῷ, is a thing utterly unknown to any but God alone. In ſhort, *Dicæarchus*, *Democritus*, *Epicurus*, and their Followers, as conſtantly as poſitively declare, That there is no Subſiſtence of the Soul after this Life; but that when the Body returns to Duſt, it immediately relapſeth into the bottomleſs Abyſs of Annihilation and Darkneſs.

Sub finem Apol. apud Platonem.

And then for the *Jews*, at the time of our Saviour's Coming, they ſtood much upon the ſame Level: For, though from the Tranſlation of *Enoch* and *Elias*, and the Death of their Patriarchs, who never inherited the Promiſes of Temporal Felicity, and particularly that of *Moſes*, which the Rabbins are pleas'd to call The Kiſs of God;

God's Mouth, intimating thereby, that he breathed out his Soul by the Force and Energy of Contemplation; without those Pains and Convulsions which are the usual Concomitants of the Death of other Men, resolving himself into the Embraces of his Maker: From the positive and express Words of *Job*, which (however some Modern Commentators are pleas'd to understand them) are, I conceive with S. *Hieron* and the Ancients, as plain and clear a Confession of the Resurrection, as any that have been made since the Promulgation of the Gospel: From the glorious Confession of that excellent Woman and her seven Children in the *Maccabees*, who all refus'd Deliverance, that they might obtain a better Resurrection: and from those many Promises of Eternal Life scatter'd up and down in the Book of *Psalms*, and other Writings of the Old Testament. Though (I say) from all these one might reasonably expect the *Jews* should have had some fuller and clearer Knowledge of the State after Death; yet being no part of that Covenant which (if strictly considered as made with that People at Mount *Sinai*) was founded only upon Temporal Promises; Peace, Long Life, Plenty, and Prosperity in their own Land, they had generally no other

Effect, than that they were believ'd to be the Reward of Men of Heroick and Extraordinary Piety. Nay, their unaccountable Blindneſs and Unattention to the Faith and Manners of their Fathers, who did all eat the ſame ſpiritual Meat, and did all drink the ſame Spiritual Drink, as we Chriſtians do, occaſion'd ſo many Cavils and Diſputes amongſt them, that the *Sadduces* peremptorily deny'd it; not only, denying the Reſurrection of the Dead, but affirming likewiſe, with the forementioned *Epicureans*, that the Souls of Men did periſh together with the Body. And tho' the *Phariſees* on the contrary confeſs'd it, yet their Notions of it (as *Joſephus* himſelf, who was one of them, tells us) were no better than thoſe of *Fairy-Land* or *Mahometan* Dreams. Delicious Dwellings, flowery Fields, Cryſtalline Rivers, and beautiful Trees of Gold, under whoſe delightful ſhade they ſhould play and toy away the whole Eternity with fair and amorous Virgins, was the utmoſt Heaven they could or car'd to imagine; and therefore the *Sadduces* ſo often foil'd and buffled them with that Argument of the Woman and her ſeven Husbands, which they thought to be ſo concluſive, that (but with different Succeſs) they attack'd likewiſe with it our Saviour himſelf.

* *Antiq. Jud.* l. 18. c. 2.

But

But now the Veil is taken off by Chriſt, and we behold the Glory of the Lord with open Face; *For this* (ſays the Apoſtle) *is the Promiſe that he has promis'd us, even Eternal Life.* A Life not of ſenſual and brutiſh Pleaſures, not a Paradiſe of all Filthineſs and Debauchery (whereby the *Epileptick* Impoſtor has likewiſe impos'd upon his Followers) but a Life of perfect Purity and Holineſs, a Life of immaterial, ſpiritual, abſtracted Joys, of chaſte and rational Delights; where our Nature ſhall be entirely conform'd to the Divine, made like to God, and we enjoy an endleſs and uninterrupted Communion with our Maker. This he has promis'd, and of this he has given us Aſſurance; all the Aſſurance the thing is capable of, in that he has not only rais'd himſelf from the Dead, but call'd likewiſe ſome of our Brethren already out of the Grave, and taken them up with him in their glorious Bodies to enter before-hand upon the Poſſeſſion of this promis'd Inheritance. So that we may boldly ſay with the Apoſtle, *We know for certain, and are fully aſſured, that if this earthly houſe of our Tabernacle be diſſolved, we have a Building of God, an Houſe not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.* Thus has the Sun of Righteouſneſs diſpell'd all thoſe

Clouds of Ignorance and Darkneſs which overſpread the whole World at his Riſing, and brought Life and Immortality to perfect Light thro' the Goſpel. Which muſt certainly be acknowledg'd to be a very great Salvation, if we conſider in the next place, that he has hereby reſcu'd us from that baſe and ſlaviſh Fear of Death, by reaſon of which we had otherwiſe been all our life-time ſubject to Bondage.

6. Now how unwelcome ſoever Death muſt be to thoſe Men, to whom 'tis therefore all Terror before, becauſe all Darkneſs behind; who are therefore diſmay'd at his Approach, becauſe they know not the Conſequences of this King of Terrors; 'tis impoſſible that Perſon ſhould immoderately fear Death, who conſiders, that 'tis only a Paſſage from this Wilderneſs to the true *Canaan*, the Reſt above, that flows with Milk and Honey, with Innocence and Happineſs for ever: who knows, that the Death of the Saints is not total, but that as in the Ceremony of Purification from Leproſie one Bird was kill'd, the other let fly into the open Air, (the myſterious Shadow of the Lepers being reſtor'd to a ſtate of Liberty) ſo when the Body dies, and returns to the Earth, the Spirit is freed from the Clogs of Mortality, and returns, with

Songs

Songs of Joy and Triumph in its mouth, to the Object of its Happineſs, the God that gave it. Nay, the faithful Chriſtians, the true Lovers of Jeſus, who have taſted the Goodneſs of the Lord, and long conſider'd and well weigh'd the incomparable Difference between the mean, imperfect, frail Felicities of this preſent World, and the ſubſtantial, ſolid, immutable Glories of that which is to come, muſt certainly cry out with the inflamed * Spouſe, *Draw us, and we will run after thee*: O! looſen our Affections from this World, that we may readily aſcend to thee. Their longing Souls will renew the paſſionate Sighs of the Exil'd Prophet, *O when ſhall we come and appear before the preſence of God!* How welcome muſt Death be to them, when it comes (as it were) with Olive-branches in its hands to offer them Peace? to ſet them at perfect Liberty from the Bondage of Corruption, the Servitude and Thraldom of their mortal Bodies? They know their happy Souls will be immediately convey'd by Angels into the Preſence of their Savior, and by him preſented to his Father without Spot or Wrinkle, inveſted with his Righteouſneſs, compleat in his Holineſs, and prepar'd and qualified for an Everlaſting Communion with him in Glory. That they

* Cant. 1. 4.

are the Reward of his Sufferings, the precious and dear Purchaſe of his Blood, and therefore that they ſhall be joyfully received into Heaven by him, who will then ſee the glorious Effects of the Travail of his Soul, and be ſatisfied. That the Angels who rejoyc'd at their Converſion, will much more do ſo at their Glorification; and the Church of the Firſt-born, who have before them entred into Glory, have a new Acceſſion of Joy, to ſee them ſafely arriv'd at the ſame undefil'd and immortal Inheritance. Theſe things (I ſay) thus duly conſidered, muſt needs inſpire them with Courage and Alacrity, and enable them chearfully to lay down their Bodies, that they may aſcend to the Seat of Bleſſedneſs, this happy Society above, that inſpires mutual Endearments and Joys for evermore. I am ſure 'twas thus with the Primitive Chriſtians. S. *Paul*, with the moſt earneſt Affections and paſſionate Zeal, deſir'd to depart hence, to leave the tranſitory, diſſatisfying Pleaſures of this Life, to be diſſolv'd and to be with Chriſt; and the Martyrs with all imaginable Boldneſs and Gallantry encountred Death, that interpos'd between them and Glory. They as willingly left their Bodies, as *Elias* let fall his Mantle, to aſcend into Heaven.

Some

Some indeed of these excellent Persons (as ‖ S. *Chrysostom* tells us) went to Death with many Appearances of Fear. When they heard the wild Beasts roar, they were struck with Horror: At the sight of the Executioners and the Instruments of Torture, they were pale and trembling. The Flesh seem'd to cry out, O! Let this Cup pass from me. But these, alas! were but the little ineffectual Struglings of innocent Nature, which, though weak and faint, follow'd the Spirit, and corrected its own Desire with, Not my Will, but thine be done. As the Moon in Eclipse, though obscure, goes on in a Regular Course, as when 'tis full of Light by the Reflection of the Sun; so these Christian Heroes, though as it were, forsaken and depriv'd of the kind Influences of the Spirit, the bright Beams and Irradiations of Divine Comfort, persever'd notwithstanding in their Regular Motion, the resolute and undaunted Profession of the Truth. No Torments could force them to renounce their Saviour; no Terrors of Death to warp from the Profession of their Faith; but the Consideration of that eternal weight of Glory, which after a short night of Sorrow and Heaviness they should receive in the Inheritance of the Saints in Light, enabled them at length to

‖ Hom. 8.

over-

overcome their Fears, and in ſpight of all the Reluctancy of Nature, to keep the Command of God, and the Faith of Jeſus. Thus the Stars fall down from Heaven, and Clods of Earth aſcend and ſhine in the Firmament. The Angels, that excell'd in Strength and Knowledge, kept not their ſtate of Purity and Glory, but are ſhamefully ſunk down into Corruption and Miſery: but theſe humble Believers, though weak and encompaſs'd with many Difficulties, were preſerved by the Blood of Jeſus from deſtructive Evil, from the Fear of the Firſt, and the Power of the Second Death, paſſing undauntedly through the Dominions of the King of Terrors to their Father's Kingdom, where with all the Company of Holy Angels and Beatified Souls, they now lie infolded in the Circles of Peace and Joy, expecting the Conſummation of Bleſſedneſs, the Redemption of their Bodies in the joyful and glorious Morning of the Reſurrection. Which brings me to my Seventh and Laſt Particular, which is to ſhew the Greatneſs of the Salvation wrought for us by Chriſt, in that he has not only merited the Salvation of our Souls, but the Redemption likewiſe, or the Reſurrection of our Bodies.

7. Of

7. Of all the Chriſtian Doctrines, this was ever eſteemed the moſt incredible; and has accordingly, in all Ages, met with the greateſt Oppoſition. The Learned Heathens generally look'd upon the Body as the Priſon, the Dungeon, and Sepulchre of the Soul, and therefore do not ſtick to affirm, That for a ſeparated Soul to return into a Body, is to undergo a ſecond Death. Nay, that famous Rabbin *Ben Maimon* was of the ſame Perſwaſion; it being a known Aphoriſm of his in his Great Work, That in the World to come (or ſtate of conſummate Happineſs) there ſhall be nothing but pure Incorporeity. This engag'd them to employ all their Learning and Parts to repreſent this Doctrine as a monſtrous and ridiculous Paradox, not fit to be embrac'd by any of the genuine Sons of Wiſdom and Learning. Accordingly we find St. *Paul* was counted mad by *Feſtus*, and but a Babler at beſt by the great Wits at *Athens*, for venturing to preach to them Jeſus and his Reſurrection: and it chiefly ſtomachs the Heathen in *Minutius Felix*, that the Chriſtians ſhould peremptorily aſſert the Reſurrection of the Body, which every Eye ſaw to be ſubject to Corruption; and yet at the ſame time threaten Ruin and Deſtruction to the Heavenly Bodies, which the generality

nerality of Philoſophers acknowledg'd incorruptible. Nay ſome Chriſtians themſelves have not been very careful to anſwer us fairly in this matter. *Photius* tells us of *Syneſius*, that for his great Parts and ſingular Abilities he was made a Biſhop, before he believ'd this Article; and the *Socinians*, *Anabaptiſts*, and ſome other Sectaries, ſeem to be no great Favourers of it at this day. But what if theſe Men believe not? Shall their Unbelief make the Faith of God of none effect? God forbid. Yea let God be true (as the Apoſtle ſpeaks) though every Man a Lyar. He then that is Truth it ſelf, who therefore can neither deceive nor be deceived, has told us, *that the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the* ‖ *Grave ſhall hear his Voice, and ſhall come forth, they that have done good to the Reſurrection of Life, and they that have done evil to the Reſurrection of Damnation.*

‖ Πάντες οἱ ἐν τοῖς Μνημείοις. Joh. 5. 28.

And now (my pious Brethren) how joyful and pleaſant a thing is this, to hear of the Reſtitution of our loſt Parts, the Renovation of our corrupted and putrefy'd Bodies? that they ſhall not be devour'd in the Jaws of Death and the Grave, but reſtor'd to us again all Fair, and Beautiful, and Glorious? Sin indeed removes us all into the Retirements of the Grave, and ſo ſurely

curely locks us up for a time in the Iron Embraces of the King of Terrors. It dismantles us of all our Strength and Beauty, and dooms us to dwell for ever in those dark Houses of Forgetfulness and Corruption. We lie in the Grave like Sheep, helpless, and fast bound in the Chains and Fetters of Death. This last Enemy has at present an absolute and entire Domination over us; our Beauty, Honour, and Glory, mouldering and consuming all away in his insatiable Dwellings. But yet he who hath the Keys of Hell and of Death, hath promis'd to unlock the Doors of these loathsome Prisons, and to let the Prisoners go forth into a state of Liberty and Glory. He turneth Man to Destruction; but his Almighty Voice will one day call through all the Receptacles of Nature, *Come again ye Children of Men.* By him lastly, who liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore, shall those that sleep in the Dust of the Earth be awak'd and sing, *Death is swallowed up in Victory.* Which Consideration alone, as it is full of Comfort, and Joy, and Triumph to every faithful Christian, so is it likewise sufficient to curb the Arrogance and Haughtiness of that Apostate Spirit. Who therefore (says an ingenious * Author of our own) chiefly frequents

* *Br. Rel. Med.* pag. 87.

quents Cœmeteries, Charnel-Houſes, and Churches, becauſe they are the Dormitories of the Dead; where, like an inſolent Champion, he beholds with Pride the Spoils and Trophies of his Victory over *Adam*.

And thus I have diſcharg'd my firſt General Head, which was, to ſhew the Greatneſs of the Salvation wrought for us by Chriſt. I now proceed to my Second, which is, very briefly to lay before you our Inexcuſableneſs, and the intolerable Aggravations of our Guilt and Puniſhment if we neglect it. *How ſhall we eſcape*, &c.

1. Then, we ſhall be utterly inexcuſable, and intolerably aggravate our Guilt and Puniſhment, if we neglect this great Salvation which Chriſt hath wrought for us, becauſe we ſhall be entirely deſtitute of the mollifying Circumſtances and Conſiderations of Ignorance. Whilſt Men had little or no Underſtanding, but walk'd on ſtill in Darkneſs, 'twas no wonder that the Foundations of the Moral, as well as of the Intellectual World, were out of courſe. Their broken Notices of another State, and beggarly Conceptions of its Delights and Entertainments, induc'd them rather to let looſe the Reins to their Intemperance, than to correct and retrench the Luxuriancy of their

their Vices. A more delicious *Canaan*, the Fields and Groves of *Elyſium*, and a *Mahometan* Paradiſe, naturally lead Men to an unbounded Gratification of their ſenſual Appetites, as to that which is the End and Perfection of their Beings, their ultimate Portion in the Regions of Eternity. So that a truly moral Man, with ſuch Perſwaſions about him, would be an Object equally ſtrange and ſurprizing, as Fewel or dry Stubble, that will not take fire in the midſt of a burning firy Furnace.

But now with Chriſtians is the Caſe quite otherwiſe. We know for certain both the Exiſtence and Nature of the other State. That for pure and holy Souls, who are entirely cleans'd from the Stains and Pollutions of corrupted Nature, and rais'd to the Poſſeſſion of their Primitive Brightneſs, remains a moſt glorious and undefil'd Inheritance, Entertainments moſt agreeable to their enlarged Faculties, exalted and divine Joys for evermore. That for impure and ſenſual Souls, on the contrary, who fight under the Banner of the World and the Fleſh, forſaking God that made them, and lightly eſteeming the Rock of their Salvation, is prepar'd a Worm that will never die, and a Fire that will ne'er be quench'd. We know (I ſay) that Refin'd and Puri-

fied

fied Souls will be receiv'd into ſerene undiſturbed Manſions of everlaſting Happineſs, the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jeruſalem, where, with all the ſhining and innumerable Companies of Holy Angels, they ſhall for ever behold and praiſe the unfolded Beauties of their God and Saviour. That on the other hand there are ſad, uncomfortable Regions of Darkneſs and Miſery, where Fire and Brimſtone, Storms and Tempeſts, will be the lamentable and everlaſting Portion of the Ungodly. Fire and Brimſtone, to poſſeſs, inflame, and torment their Bodies; and the Storms and Tempeſts of an enraged Conſcience impetuouſly to hurry their awak'ned Souls through all the unhappy Stages of that woful Eternity. If we then dare to commit Wickedneſs, who have received this clear Knowledge of the ſad Effects and Conſequences; that it cuts off all our hopes of the Glories of Heaven, and irrevocably condemns us to the unconceivable Agonies and Amazements of Hell, we put our ſelves beyond all poſſibility of Excuſe, and (as our Saviour himſelf aſſures us) unmeaſurably enhanſe the Severities of our Condemnation. *This is the Condemnation*, * ſays he with an Emphaſis, *i. e.* the higheſt, the greateſt, the moſt intolerable Condemnation, *that when Light is come*

* Joh. 3. 19.

to the World, Men love Darkness rather
[illegible] In a word, [illegible] vouch-
safe to [illegible] and
graciously overlook the unhappy Miscarri-
ages of the [illegible] World: He may
be favourable to the Servant that knows
not his Will, and therefore does unwitting-
ly things worthy of Stripes; But Christi-
ans, who [illegible] Lord's Will, and yet
prepare [illegible] do according-
ly, will [illegible]
[illegible] and therefore will
[illegible] be beaten with many Stripes.
[illegible] shall be utterly inexcusable, and
[illegible] aggravate our Guilt and Punish-
ment, if we neglect [illegible]
[illegible] Christ [illegible]
thereby [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]
[

Uneasiness and Need; and the Lord [illegible]
Governour of all the Kingdoms of the Ea[illegible]
vouchsaf'd to dwell among us, though [illegible]
scarce found a place where to lay his He[illegible]
That the King of Glory was contented [illegible]
only to be despis'd and rejected of Me[illegible]
become a Man of Sorrows, and acqu[illegible]
with Grief; but also to suffer his most [illegible]
cious Life to be most cruelly and ignom[illegible]
ously taken from among Men; that [illegible]
might entitle us again to Happiness [illegible]
Glory. Nay, we have seen the only [illegible]
ten Son of the Living God oppress'd [illegible]
groaning under a heavier load of [illegible]
than all this; almost sinking under [illegible]
supportable Burthen of his Father's W[illegible]
and in the Anguish and Bitterness o[illegible]
Soul most lamentably complaining, [illegible]
his Father too, whom he had never o[illegible]
ed, had for the Foulness and Black[illegible]
our Iniquities hid his Face from him; [illegible]
more, we are sensible that we our [illegible]
have been the Betrayers and Murthere[illegible]
the Lord of Life; that he has fre[illegible]
bled afresh, and been crucify'd [illegible]
our new Sins; that our repeated Inq[illegible]
have wounded his sacred Side, and [illegible]
rows of our Ingratitude pierc'd him [illegible]
very Heart. How (notwithstanding [illegible]
this) he is so merciful, that he will [illegible]
su[illegible]

suffer his Displeasure to arise, but that he calls us daily, importunes us incessantly, and intreats us earnestly to return. That he begs us not to ruin and destroy our selves, opens his Arms to receive us, tho' we have been never so ungrateful, and promiseth Pardon for all that is past, if we will but take care to be obedient for the future. Lastly, we know, that if we will return, and do Works meet for Repentance, he will in due time take us from this Vale of Misery, these Regions of Exile, this State of our Pilgrimage into his Father's House, there solemnly pronounce our Discharge before all his Saints, and crown us with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory. Now then to trespass against this great Friend and Benefactor, whose wonderful Love even condescended to assume our Nature into my Divinity, and so to exalt it above Cherubims and all the Highest Orders of Intelligences; who in our Nature was assumed graciously embraced for our sakes both the Miseries and Calamities of a Harassed Life, and into the Infamy and Torture, even accursed Death; who still [illegible] all our disingenuous and [illegible] Ungrateful Returns, continues his Tenderness and Compassion for us, even [illegible] offering his Grace and Pardon to the

greatest of Sinners, and by all the gentle Insinuations of an unwearied Lover endeavouring to allure and entice them into Happiness. To trespass (I say) against this great Friend and Benefactor, is certainly a Provocation of the most amazing Proportions, a Sin of the deepest Dye, the basest and foulest Ingratitude, that can be imagined. What then (think you) will be the Condition of such Sinners when God first come to Judge the World? When they shall see him, whose infinite Love they have despised and rejected, coming in the Clouds of Heaven, and all his Holy Angels with him, to reward every Man according to his Works? Alas! every Circumstance of this glorious Day will sufficiently represent to their awakened Conscience the monstrous Aggravations of [illegible] unparalleled Ingratitude. [illegible] now comes in the Clouds with Vengeance, is that very Saviour who [illegible] them. Those Emeralds or [illegible] that shine so gloriously in his [illegible] deep and gastly Wounds he [illegible] their sakes: [illegible] and Myriads of holy Ones, that [illegible] he [illegible] for their Eternal Co[illegible] and those bright Regions of [illegible] Day, which appear over their Head[illegible]

Place he ſo dearly purchas'd for their immortal Inheritance. These things (I ſay) thus united and at once repreſented to their view, will ſwell their Paſſions to that Height and Fullneſs, as infinitely exceed the Meaſures of Mortality to conceive. They will occaſion ſuch ſharp, ſuch acute Reflections, as (like two-edged Swords) will every way rend, and tear, and ſtab, and gaſh their mollified Spirits with freſh incurable Wounds to all Eternity. Their monſtrous Ingratitude will then look them broad in the face, and (like frightful and terrible Gorgons or Furies) poſſeſs their Souls with Horror and Trembling, with ineffable Amazement and everlaſting Confuſion. In a word, The thorough and lively Apprehenſions which they ſhall then have of their Sins and Follies, will ſo inrage and enrage them, that they ſhall be all on a flame with Fury and Indignation againſt themſelves, weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing their Teeth; always, as it were, upon a Rack, without any Intermiſſion of their Pains and Anguiſh, diſtorted, afflicted, diſtracted, confounded.

What then remains, but that, ſince theſe things are ſo, we ſeriouſly take our Caſe into Conſideration? That ſince our Burden is lighter than that of Sins, or Devils, we

run with greater Chearfulness the ways of God's Commandments? That we grieve not the Holy Spirit, nor turn the Grace of God into Lasciviousness; but that the great, extraordinary Assistances which we now enjoy under the Gospel, influence our Wills, direct our Choice, and give Warmth and Vigour to our Affections? That the certain Faith and Assurance which we have of a Future State, and of its Rewards and Punishments, work most powerfully upon our Minds to conquer all the Temptations of this Life, to deterr us from doing any thing whereby we may forfeit our Crown, and to render us stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know, that our Labour will not be in vain in the Lord? and since the greatest Punishments imaginable attend our Miscarriages, that we lift up the hands that hang down, and strengthen the feeble knees, and run with patience the Race that is set before us? Let us then look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, and follow his Example, who for the Joy that was set before him endur'd the Cross, despis'd the Shame, and is therefore now sat down at the Right-hand of the Majesty on High. Let us frequently contemplate his stupendious, unfathomable Love in vouch-

vouchsafing to assume our Nature; that he, who is Mighty, should so debase himself to magnifie us, and evermore say with the inflam'd and seraphick Virgin, Holy and Blessed is his Name. Let us, with her Piety and Devotion, view the Immaculate Lamb of God crown'd with Thorns upon the Cross: Let us behold him there bleeding and dying for our Sins. Let his unconceivable Agonies sink deep into our Hearts, and make us to weep bitterly for those Sins which caus'd such Torments to our Dearest Lord. Let us beseech him by all that Anguish and Amazement his Soul endur'd for our sakes, never to suffer us to crucifie him any more; but that he would be pleas'd to come and take up his Lodging with us, to drive out all those Usurpers, the World with its Vanities; to make an utter Destruction of every *Amalakite*, and to take to himself the entire Possession of our Hearts. Let us most passionately intreat him not to suffer our immortal Souls, the price of his own Blood, to perish; but that he would be graciously pleas'd to wash away all their Stains, to cloath them in his white Robe, and so to present them spotless and unblameable to our Heavenly Father. Lastly, If the Author of Salvation, and that Eternal too, be

worthy to be prais'd, let us now begin these Songs upon Earth, which will be our happy Employment and [illegible] in Heaven, with all those glorious Angels and Holy Ten Thousands that worship about the Throne, saying, *Blessing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power be unto him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for Ever and Ever.* Amen. Amen. Allelujah.

ECCLES

ECCLES. ix. v. 10.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.

WEre we to take the Measures of our most holy Profession, as they are reach'd out to us in the Systems of some Christian Sectaries, how prodigiously irrational and absurd an Institution would it appear to be? An Institution both repugnant to the glorious [illegible] of God, and also destructive to the Welfare and Happiness of Mankind. They pronounce it a state of absolute Liberty and Emancipation, a perfect Discharge from all Duty and Obedience, a [illegible] of Libertinism and Licentiousness. Provided a Man be orthodox in his Notions, and stand in his Faith, as no matter how he lives, like an Angel or like a Devil, so [illegible] their Reason is complement to [illegible]

[illegible]

ses; and rather than forsake their darling Vices, to shelter them under the Patronage even of the immaculate Jesus.

But if we look upon Christianity as our Great Master himself is pleas'd to hold the Perspective, as he is all Fair, [illegible] ὡραιότητος, the Perfection of Beauty, and the Holy One of Israel, so would his Institution appear to be [illegible] Copy of his Eternal Beauty and Holiness. It commands us not to rest in a fruitless, barren, and dead Faith, but to evidence its Life and Reality by our Works. That we walk worthy of the Vocation [illegible] we are called; turning from [illegible] of our own Brains, these vain, fantastick [illegible] of our [illegible] Imagination, to serve truly and painfully the Living God. That we trifle not away our precious hours in Idleness and Impertinence; but work out our Salvation with all that [illegible] a matter of such [illegible] with Fear and Trembling. [illegible] by all the endearing Methods [illegible] Love and Kindness [illegible] into the Practice of all [illegible] us even by the [illegible] Appearances [illegible] the Wonder, the Praise, and the Adoration of [illegible] Glory

Psal. 50. 2.

that

that we think no Sacrifices worthy of our Maker, but such as are offer'd in the purest Fires, the most ardent and brightest Flames of Sacrificial Love. That the Redeem'd of the Lord declare not his Glory in such feeble Sounds and Voices, as are the faint Echoes of a distant Valley; but that they clap their hands together with Joy and Cheerfulness, and sing Praises to him lustily, and with a good Courage. That our Souls, with all their Powers and Faculties, magnify and set forth the admirable Greatness of the Lord, and our Minds also, or Spirits, [illegible] with Joy unspeakable in God [illegible] Saviour. In a word, That we do not the Work of the Lord [illegible], nor be [illegible] and [illegible] in the [illegible] of our [illegible], but always [illegible] in [illegible] all those [illegible] all their golden Opportunities [illegible] to our greatest [illegible] Diligence serving the Lord. *Whatsoever thy hand [illegible] to do, do it with thy might.*

[illegible] of which Exhortation, I [illegible] to you, from the [illegible]:

I. [illegible] of God.

II. [illegible] the [illegible]

III. [illegible]

ble Value of the Rewards that attend us. And,

IV. From the exceeding Brevity or Shortness of the time we are allowed to work in.

1. From the Nature of God. [illegible] indeed such a one as the *Epicureans* [illegible] to be; a Being taken up with the [illegible] and Contemplation of his own [illegible] and that would never vouchsafe to respect the humble Addresses and Supplications of his most intimid Servants, we [illegible] no great reason to wonder at [illegible] and indifferency, that lukewarm and [illegible] less Behaviour which appears [illegible] our [illegible] Performance. [illegible] [illegible] conclude [illegible] [illegible] all upon [illegible] Being, [illegible] [illegible] all their Wi[illegible] would neither hear them, [illegible] But alas! we have no such Pr[illegible] terfuge for our Imp[illegible] we serve, is indeed [illegible] Eternal Being that [illegible] tar, without the Assistance of [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

* *Senec. de Benef. lib. 4. cap. 4.*

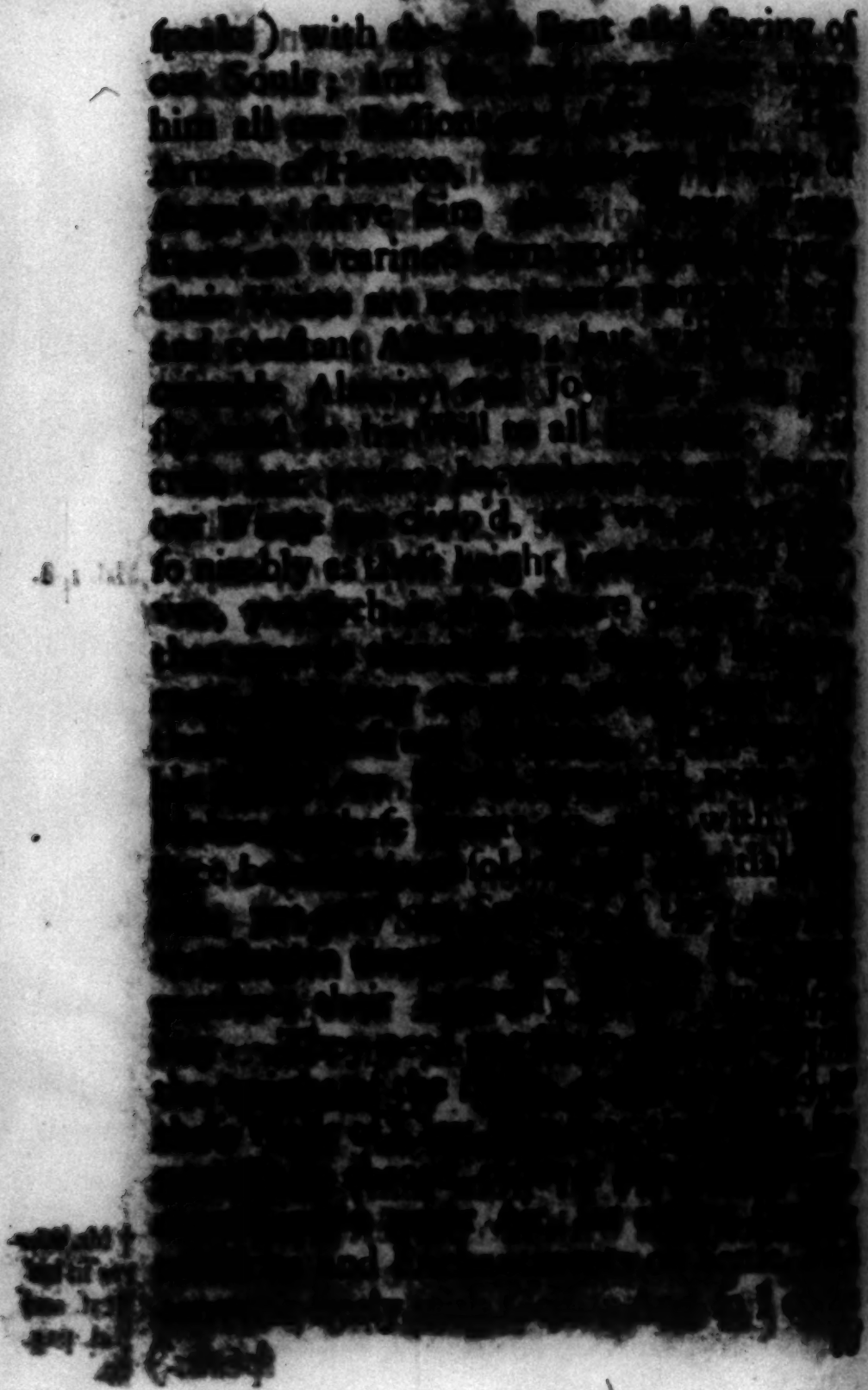
of his own Essential Perfections. He dwells in the [illegible] encircled with such [illegible] of Light, that the [illegible] that [illegible] and at [illegible] his inaccessible [illegible] and Goodness [illegible] with his glorious Mo[illegible] [illegible] thus inhabits [illegible] [illegible] both [illegible] [illegible] * Psal. 33. 13.

[illegible] 1 King. 20. 13, 28.

[illegible]

long

Mal. 1. 8.



to my Second Conſideration, which is, to repreſent to you the Reaſonableneſs of the Exhortation contain'd in the Text, from the Nature of our own Souls.

2. Sad indeed and deplorable are the Decays of our Primitive Beauty, and lamentable the Ruins of our Original Frame. God made Man upright; his whole Conſtitution was beautiful and harmonious, and his Soul (drawn, as it were, by the central Force of her native Seat) mov'd naturally towards Heaven. But if we view him in his preſent Condition, *Quantum mutatus ab ille eſt!* how is this glorious Creature changed! Clouds and Darkneſs (if I may ſo ſpeak) are continually round about him: Confuſion and Diſorder are the Diſpoſition of his Seat. His Underſtanding is dark and cloudy; his Will crooked and perverſe; and he is become a ſtrange Contradiction to himſelf; being not able to do the things that he would. Wars and Tumults, inteſtine Broils and Commotions, ruffle and diſcompoſe him, and there is a Law in his Members perpetually fighting againſt and frequently bringing into Captivity the Law of the Mind.

But though the Soul is thus lamentably fallen from her Primitive State of Excellency and Perfection; yet, how glorious is

 ſhe

ſhe ſtill in compariſon of all the Creatures that are round about her? The glimmering Remains of her original Beauty, the very Twilight of her native Luſtre and Brightneſs, appears ſo wonderful and dazling, that ſhe is ſtill but a few degrees below the Angels of God. How ſwift are her Motions? how nimble her Thoughts? how brisk and active her Operations and Reflections? The ſwifteſt Morning-Ray paſſeth not ſo ſoon from Eaſt to Weſt, as ſhe flies through all the Airy Regions into the higheſt Heavens, and thence again deſcends through all the Ethereal Plains, to contemplate in their various Manſions the Workmanſhip of her Maker. How exalted are her Affections? how boundleſs her Deſires? how vaſtly large and comprehenſive her Capacities? She weighs all the Excellencies of Nature in a Balance, and finds them wanting: her Appetites and Inclinations being no more to be ſatisfied with any Created Good, than an hungry Stomach with wiſe Sayings or excellent Diſcourſes.

But now has God [illegible] our Minds with theſe noble [illegible] to prefer the Delights or Intereſts of this World, and to believe ſome [illegible] and ſurpaſſing Advantages only on his Service and Obedience? No, theſe vaſt capacious Spirits,

that

that can take in and lodge so many Truths together without Confusion or Disorder; that are so restless and indefatigable in their Search after Happiness, and can no where acquiesce, or terminate their Desires upon any Created Good, are design'd for the highest and most exalted Entertainments. Not for these disproportionate Objects of Sense, the fæculent Pleasures of the Body, (which the contracted Faculties of Brutes are able even in their utmost Intention to comprehend) but for Joys truly Angelical and Divine; for Communion and Fellowship with God himself by Prayers and Praises here, and for the most intimate [illegible] of his Beatifick and Essential Glories in Heaven hereafter. How unworthily then do we behave our selves towards them, when we decoy them down into earthly Enjoyments? How do we cramp and straighten their Faculties? contract and lessen their aspiring Strength and Vivacity? Their natural Motion, you see, is towards Heaven, and they [illegible] at nothing less than Glory, and [illegible] and Immortality. [illegible] them to the Earth, when they are ready to take Wing, and fly towards Heaven. Let us not enslave them to poor and beggarly Objects, when their Capacities dispose them for the

Fruition of the Best Being, the Life of Angels. When through the Assistances of Religion they are advanc'd to their true Elevation, they'll immediately ascend above the Magnetism of secular Entertainments. They will then be possest with such lively and ravishing Apprehensions of the Divine Beauty, as will oblige them, for his sake, utterly to discard and renounce all their other Loves. Though there be threescore Queens, and fourscore Concubines, and Virgins without number, yet their Love, their Undefil'd, will be but one. In a word, They'll collect and concenter all the scatter'd Rays of their Affections into this one Point, delight and solace themselves only in the Lord their God, and sing and give Praise to him with Fervour and Alacrity as the Angels do, who joyfully wait his Call, and stand with Wings stretch'd out, ready to fly when he commands.

3. I am to represent to you the Reasonableness of the Exhortation contain'd in the Text, from the Consideration of the transcendent and inestimable Value of the Rewards that attend us. Μέγας ὁ ἀγὼν ἔστι, θεῖον τὸ ἔργον, ὑπὲρ βασιλείας, ὑπὲρ ἐλευθερίας. We are engag'd, says the Philosopher, in a great Conflict, a Divine Enterprize,

prize, 'tis for a Kingdom and for Liberty; for the Liberty even of the Sons of God, and for the Kingdom of Heaven. As we were not redeem'd by corruptible things, such as Gold, Silver, or precious Stones; so neither is our purchas'd Inheritance of so trifling and inconsiderable a value. The Liberty of the Sons of God is an Eternal Emancipation from Sin and Misery, from the Sollicitations of our Senses, the Importunities of Satan, and from all the Disadvantages and Incumbrances of this mortal State. Have you seen the Cedars or the Fir-Trees, which from a little Seed rise so high, and spread their Branches so wide? Just so will it fare with Man in the State of Regeneration; infinitely beyond his present Self will his Perfections be. Here the Corruptible Body presseth down the Soul, and the Earthly Tabernacle weighs down the Mind, which otherwise would muse of many things. But there will our Spirits, to their endless Joy and Comfort, find their Garments lighter; this unwieldy Clog of Flesh and Blood being made fit to serve them in their brisker Motions, and even to vye with the fleetest Seraph that flies in the Regions of Light and Glory. Here though we sometimes travel with Vigour and Alacrity in the way that leads to Sion;

yet in an instant such Fogs and Vapours rise from our terrene and sensual Affections, as cast a cold Damp over all our Faculties, and make us heartless and unactive as the Earth we tread on. But there we shall be all Life, and Spirit, and Wing, entirely freed from the Vicissitudes of Mortality, and both our active and sprightly Plumes in the Silver Streams of Eternal Joy and Delight. Here Satan sometimes mixeth himself among the Children of God, and many enter into the Choirs of the Saints, who know not how to chant their ravishing Melody, the Songs of Sion. But in the Blessed Consort above, every Soul will be harmonious, and skilfully contribute its part to the full Music of Heaven. The glorious Company of the Apostles, the goodly Fellowship of the Prophets, the Holy Army of Martyrs, together with the several Orders of glorious Angels, will stand about the Throne, with one Heart and one Voice giving glory to him who sits thereupon, and to the Lamb for ever and ever. They shall wear Crowns on their Heads more bright and glittering, than those of the Mighty Oppressors; and those immortal Palms they shall carry in their hands, declare, *That Death is Swallowed up in victory.* They shall no longer

stand

stand behind the Wall of Partition, nor be debarr'd by a thick House of Clay, from beholding the ultimate Object of their Love and Praise; but all intervening Obstacles and Impediments shall be remov'd, καὶ ὀφθήσεται ὁ θεὸς τῶν θεῶν ἐν Σιών, and that *Summum Bonum*, that Fountain of Life and Blessedness, that Primitive and Original Beauty, the God of Gods himself, appear in his Essential Lustre and Brightness, to every one of them in *Sion*. In short, 'Tis in vain to attempt the painting of this Blessed State by Rhetorical Colours: no Words, no Thoughts, can reach it; yea, the bold, licentious Metaphors even of Poets themselves, fall infinitely short of its Greatness and Excellency. *Eye hath not seen, says St. Paul, nor ear heard, neither hath it entred into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

Psal. 84.7.

Now then can we think this Blessed State design'd for them that are at Ease in *Sion*; who rest in the Notional Considerations of the Goodness of their Maker, and therefore lie securely dissolv'd in the softest Caresses of Luxury and Voluptuousness? No. We must be conformable to our Lord in the Likeness of his Death, before we can be so in the Likeness of his Resurrection.

We muſt crucifie the Old Man, and utterly aboliſh the whole Body of Sin, and by our conſtant and uniform Practice of an Univerſal Righteouſneſs, ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate. We muſt labour with all our Might to make our Calling and Election ſure, and preſs with all poſſible Vehemence towards the Mark for the prize of the High Calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus. If theſe Corruptible Crowns, the fading momentary Honours of this Life; if (I ſay) the tranſient Favour of a Prince, and the vain, uncertain *Plaudits*'s and *Huſſas* of the Crowd cannot be juſtly atchiev'd without Toil and Labour; then ſurely we cannot expect that theſe immortal Honours, the Approbation of God himſelf, the Applauſe of his Holy Angels, and the Crown of Immortality, can be obtain'd at a cheaper Rate. This were to proſtitute the Divine Favours, to viliſie the Pearl of Price, and inſufferably to debaſe that Glory which cannot be comprehended but by the Circle of Eternity. Nothing then, but Conſtancy and Perſeverance, can crown the Chriſtian Hero, and ſet on his Head an immortal Diadem. *Be faithful unto the End*, ſaith our Lord, *and I will give thee the Crown of Life*: and again, *To him that overcometh, I will grant to ſit down with me*

on

on my Throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his Throne. Lift up the Hands then that hang down, and strengthen the feeble Knees. Behold, Thy Saviour holds out to thee a Crown of Glory, and invites thee to partake of his immortal Joys. He calls thee to the blissful Choir of Angels, and to the glorious Society of Just Men made perfect, who following him in White Robes, do nothing but sing and love to all Eternity. Alas! could we but hear some Echoes of those Songs wherewith they make the Paradise of God, the Place of his happy Residence, the Seat of his Eternal Empire, the Heaven of Heavens continually resound; some Remains of those Voices, that Symphony and Joy wherewith the Saints above triumph in the Praises and solemn Adorations of the King of Spirits, how would they inflame our Desires to be joined with them? O how amiable should we think those Dwellings of the Lord of Hosts? Our Souls would most passionately desire and long to enter into the Courts of the Lord, and to go and sing with those glorious Beings the Praises of the Living God. We should choose rather to be Door-Keepers, the very meanest Persons of all that Blessed Company in the House of God, than to enjoy for ever the

utmost

utmoſt Liberality of Created Nature in the Tents of Wickedneſs. We ſhould think nothing too much to part with for that Bleſſed Inheritance, but readily ſell all that we have for that Pearl of Price, that ineſtimable Treaſure, thoſe ſolid and ſubſtantial Glories of the Kingdom of Heaven. In a word, we ſhould chearfully follow the Patriarchs, Prophets, Apoſtles, Martyrs, and Confeſſors, through all the Stages of Mortification and Self-denial; moſt gladly encountering all the Tribulations, Hardſhips, and Difficulties the World or Satan can bring upon us, that we might at laſt attain to that ineffable Glory. But,

Laſtly, I come to repreſent to you, the Reaſonableneſs of the Exhortation contain'd in the Text, from the Conſideration of the exceeding Brevity or Shortneſs of the Time we are allow'd to work in. Man is like a thing of nought, ſays the Pſalmiſt, his time paſſeth away like a Shadow, that neceſſarily diſappears when the Sun leaves our Horizon, and may alſo fall ſhort of that Period by the Interpoſition of a Cloud. He carries within himſelf the Cauſes of a neceſſary and ſpeedy Diſſolution, and is alſo liable to ten thouſand Accidents without, that may haſten his Ruin. Nay, though by the good Providence of God he happily eſcapes

all

all these, and arrives to his utmost Period, that natural Term, which is set him by the Temperament of the First Qualities; yet what an airy, fleting, and fantastick Appearance is he? Our Life is but a Vapour, says St. *James*, which appears and dances up and down a few Minutes over the places that gave it Birth, and then vanisheth, and sinks back into its primitive Night and Darkness. The Day wears away apace, our Sun hastens to go down, the Shadows every Moment encrease, and the Hours of Darkness come on, that long Night of Silence and Solitude, wherein no Man can work. *It is appointed for all men once to die*, says the * Apostle, and then for ever to cease from labouring and improving their State; for immediately follows Judgment, which consigns them either with *Lazarus* to the Refreshments and Consolations of *Abraham's* Bosom, or to the eternal Dwellings of *Dives* in everlasting Burnings.

* Heb. 9. 27.

† *Plato* indeed, and from him the *Romanists* at this day, talk much of an intermediate State, where Satisfaction may be made for some Miscarriages of our Lives here. But in all the Word of God, there is not so much as one place that countenanceth this Opinion. 'Tis not the Doctrine of God, but

† *Phædon.* c. 45. p. 178. in *Dialog. select. Edit. Cantab.*

but the Invention of Men; the weak and beggarly Element of this World, not the Revelation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? He only commands us to be therefore prepar'd continually for our Last Hour, because we then enter upon a state eternal and immutable: that private particular Sentence which passeth upon the Soul at her Departure from the Body, being to be openly renew'd and confirm'd upon the whole Man at the General Day of Judgment. How ought then this Consideration to alarm all the dormant Powers and Faculties of our Souls, and to wind them up to the highest pitch of Action in this momentous Affair? How careful, I say, should we be for a prudent Management and Husbandry of these fleeting Moments, to secure to our Selves a happy Portion in the Regions of Eternity? If we misspend these Days of Probation, you see there remain no more. If we neglect these present Opportunities, we are lost for ever. And what a dismal Reflection (think ye) will this be in the other World, when we shall remember, that Mercy was frequently offer'd us, and that we as frequently rejected it: and that for the little imperfect Services of a few Days, our Maker graciously offer'd to place a Crown of Eternal Glory upon our Heads?

Alas!

Alas! This is the chief Ingredient of that bitter Cup which afflicts and torments the Damn'd for ever and ever. This that dismal Thought, which raiſeth the Storms and Tempeſts in the Kingdom of Darkneſs below. Once they might have been ſav'd; once they had their Day, and they refus'd the Light when it ſhin'd. Their God was gracious and merciful to them, but they were cruel to themſelves. He offer'd them Mercy, but they would never accept it. He call'd them to Life, but they obſtinately choſe Death. No Tortures ſo exquiſite, as ſuch Reflections. No Lakes ſo fiery, as the Upbraidings of ſuch an enraged Conſcience. Theſe (I ſay) are the Furies that twiſt about their Heads, and ſting, and hiſs, and make them roar to Eternity.

From which miſerable State God in Mercy preſerve us all, through the Merits and Mediation of Jeſus the Beloved. Amen, &c.

MATT.

Ser. 6

MATTH. xi. 28.

Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you Rest.

BUT am I call'd indeed? may the awakened Soul say. Call'd too to Life, and Refreshment, and Peace, though my Sins and Impieties are so many? Does the Holy One of Israel regard so vile a Creature? and will He, who is the God of all Purity, vouchsafe to receive into his Arms so impure a Wretch? Yes; for 'tis the Voice of my Beloved that spake. He stands not, as formerly, behind the Wall, nor looks in at the Window, shewing himself only through the Latteſs; but has open'd the Door, and is come in, and speaks and says to me, Rise up, my Love, my fair one, and come away. Draw me then, O my Beloved, and we will run after thee. Receive me, though the Sun has

has look'd upon me; though I am black, and courſe as the Tents of *Kedar*, I am bow'd down and ready to ſink under the weight of my Sins: I have no ſtrength againſt this great multitude of Tranſgreſſions that is ſet in Array againſt me, nor know I what to do, only my longing, my languiſhing Eyes are ſtill upon thee, and I will patiently hearken what the Lord God will farther ſay unto me, who ſo graciouſly ſpeaks to Sinners, that, like his own, they turn and come unto him. *Come unto me* (ſays he) *all ye, that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you Reſt.*

In which Words are four things obſervable.

I. A gracious Invitation; *Come.*

II. The Perſon to whom the Invitation is made; *Unto me*: that is, unto Chriſt.

III. The Perſons invited. All Perſons, Sinners in general; *All ye that labour, and are heavy laden.* All ye that are weary, and groan, and are bow'd down, and ready to ſink under the grievous Burden of your Sins.

IV. The Benefit of accepting this Invitation; *I will give you Reſt.*

I. We have in the Text a gracious Invitation, *Come.* God ſpake once, and twice, alſo

also have I heard the same, that Mercy belongeth unto God. For this is the Voice of him who is the Wisdom of the Father; that Wisdom, which by the Mouth of his Prophet * *Isaiah* called in the same manner to the Sons of Men, inviting them to come freely, and partake of his Divine Refreshments. *Ho, every one that thirsteth*, says he, *come to the waters; and he that hath no money come, buy, and eat; yea come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price.*

* Chap. 55. ver. 1.

The Angels indeed that sinn'd, are fall'n into the gloomy and lamentable State of utter Desperation. There is no Mercy in store for these self-deluded, inexcusable Apostates of the Upper World; but because they foolishly exalted themselves against the Lord, whom they could not but know to be the Author and Fountain of all Happiness and Glory, they are entirely dismantled of their primitive Robes of Light, and cast down from their Heavenly Mansions into this Lower Orb, where, in miserable and darker Habitations, they are reserv'd, as condemn'd Malefactors, σειραῖς ζόφου, says ‖ St. *Peter*; δεσμοῖς ἀϊδίοις ὑπὸ ζόφον, says † St. *Jude*, for everlasting Chains of the Blackness of Darkness at the Judgment of the Great Day, when they shall be brought

‖ 2 Ep. 2. 4.
† Ver. 6.

brought forth, as out of a Prison, before the Tribunal of Christ, and hear the just Sentence of Eternal Death more solemnly pronounc'd against them before the General Assembly of the Saints and Angels.

This (I say) is the deplorable and unflone Condition of the Apostate Angels. Their Fall is irrecoverable, their Sin irremissible, and the Decree that is gone out against them irreversible. But Man, tho' a Being of a much lower Class, and an Apostate too, finds Favour and Mercy at the hands of his God. He vouchsafes him the liberty of Second Thoughts, and if we will but be obedient and hearken, promiseth to entire Renovation of his Corrupted Nature by the abundant and powerful Communications of his most Holy Spirit. Nay, so desirous is he of this happy Change, that he long prostitutes his Patience (as I shall instantly shew more at large) to Mens wanton Humours in Expectation of it, is contented to lay aside his amazing Glories, and seems to divest and strip himself of all his Attributes, save that of Mercy. His All-seeing Eye graciously overlooks our manifold Sins and Wickednesses, and, as tho' he saw them not, continues to shine upon us with its reviving Brightness. His Justice gives way to his Forbearance and

Long-suffering; and when it takes place, 'tis so temper'd and qualify'd, that in the [illegible] of Judgment he always remembers Mercy. Mercy is his Favourite, his darling Excellence, that lovely and amiable Attribute which is over all his Works, and in which, we are sure, his Goal takes most Delight and Complacency.

Thus by this Name he, in the Presence and Assembly of his invincible Holy Ones upon Mount *Sinai*, most solemnly proclaim'd himself to his Servant *Moses*: *The Lord*, says he, *the Lord God, merciful and gracious*. Nay, tho' he is the God of all Truth, and therefore can no more deceive than be deceived; yet, as though it had been a small thing thus to have proclaim'd himself before Men and Angels, he has likewise, in a gracious and wonderful Condescension to the Infirmities of his Creatures, and that the broken and contrite Spirit might have the [illegible] of [illegible] that could possibly be [illegible], vouchsaf'd even to interpose his Oath, and as solemnly to swear the same thing. *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his way, and live: Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?* What tender, what

Exod. 34. 6.

Ezek. 33. 11.

what compassionate Strains are these? 'Tis as if he had said, Since there is no Being so great as my self, by my self I have sworn, that as sure as I am God, that eternal and faithful Being, with whom is no Variableness or Shadow of Turning, I desire not the Death of any Sinner; but had rather, ten thousand times over, that you would all, from the least to the greatest, hear my Voice in this Accepted Time, this day of Salvation, and repent, and be saved. For now do I freely offer you my Grace, which I most passionately beseech and intreat you to accept, and to return, and live. Turn ye then, turn ye unto me, for why will ye die? Why will ye weary me out with your continued Provocations? Why will ye constrain me, by your unworthy and most wretched Abuses of my Grace, your insufferable Grievings of my Spirit, at length to depart from you, and to leave you to die in your Sins? Is Eternal Death so desirable a thing? Is Heaven and my Glory so despicable and vile? Why thus, let me ask you again, since you have my Grace to enable you to Return, nay, since it is far easier for you to be saved than to be damned, why, why, will ye die, O house of Israel?

Thus does our Heavenly Father, by the most solemn Protestations demonstrate his

Everlasting Love and Kindness to Mankind. And how exactly do all his Dispensations correspond with these his gracious Declarations? With what Patience (I say) and Forbearance, does he deal even with the greatest of Sinners? How affectionately intreat them to fly into the Harbour, and to secure themselves, by a timely Reformation, from the Wrath which is to come? Such various Ways and Methods does he contrive to bring them to Repentance, so earnestly beg and follicite them to accept in time the Terms of Salvation, that one would think 'twas his own, not their Interest, that Men should be sav'd. He always, like a generous Enemy, declares Sinners his just Anger and Displeasure, and excites them before it be too late, to prepare to Meet him, and with Weapons, which will most certainly prevail, *viz.* Prayers and Tears, to disarm his Justice.

Thus when within the small compass of about two thousand years his gracious and marvellous Works of Creation and Providence were so far from being praised and had in Honour, that all Flesh had degenerated from this great End of its Creation, and most shamefully corrupted its way upon the Earth; tho' he was griev'd (to speak after the manner of Men) at the very

Heart,

Heart, and it repented him that he had made Man, yet he could not immediately withdraw his Hand, and let him fall into Ruine, but mercifully prolong'd the day of Vengeance and gave his sinful Creatures time and space for Repentance. He resolv'd indeed, that the Spirits, which he had made, should not Eternally remain in their Bodies, as Slaves and Vassals to serve the Instruments of Unrighteousness, but that if Men repented not, he would open the Windows of Heaven and break up the Fountains of the great Deep, and bring in a Flood upon them, that should wash them all away. But, before he came to this, *Noah*, a Preacher of Righteousness, must daily assure them of their Danger, and he waits their Repentance a hundred and twenty Years.

Thus too, tho' the Sins of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* were very grievous, and cryed loud, and the Cry of them ascended up into the Ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, yet could not they prevail with him to let loose his Thunder to overwhelm them with a swift and deserv'd Destruction, but on the contrary (to prevent their Ruine) he, by his good Providence, so order'd and dispos'd things, that a holy and pious Person, living amongst them,

them, should first lay before them their [illegible] Impieties, and warn them to prevent the heavy Judgments due to them, by a speedy Repentance. And, when (notwithstanding all this) they sinned yet more, and forc'd his Holy Spirit to forsake them utterly, by their intolerable Fornications; yet would not his Goodness then give him leave to execute upon them the Fierceness of his Indignation; but still stay'd his hand, and engag'd him to be [illegible]. Although 'twas possible for him to be [illegible]'d, it induc'd him to make a [illegible] to go down, and see, whether they had indeed done altogether [illegible] of it, which was come unto him. Nay, tho' their Sins and Provocations were so many and so great, yet so much greater was his Mercy; so unwilling was he that they should perish, that he [illegible] the intercedeing Patriarch, that, if he [illegible] find but ten Righteous Persons amongst them, he would save them all.

But (not to multiply Instances, which are numberless) the liveliest and most breathing Image of the Divine Mercy and Pity, the [illegible] and ravishing Displays of his [illegible] Compassions appears in the wonderful Contrivance of our Restitution, the mysterious and Costly Redemption

demption of Lapsed Man. This is an Instance of Love so [illegible] as will afford new [illegible] through [illegible] Ages of Eternity, for the Contemplation and Praises of the [illegible] and Angels in Heaven. Since 'tis a Province too great for any Created Being, the Son of God himself, before whose insupportable Glories the Seraphims [illegible] gradually descends from the [illegible] to the Wilderness of [illegible] straying Creatures to [illegible] of the House of [illegible] Voice to call them [illegible] great Shepherd and [illegible] He [illegible] Pardon [illegible] to [illegible] [illegible] of the [illegible] all [illegible] them [illegible] est, not the most presumptuous [illegible] but that all should come to the knowledge of [illegible] is his [illegible] having [illegible] took, and [illegible] Lessons of Invitation with his own mood;

* Mark 16. 15.

† 2 Cor. 5. 19.

and being now to return to the Father, he (to the Everlasting Comfort and Joy of Repenting Sinners) commands his Apostles to go forth and carry them into all Parts of the World. *Go* * says he, *and Preach the Gospel* (these glad Tidings of Reconciliation and Peace between God and Man) *to every Creature.* And accordingly the St. † *Paul* tells us, that *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself*, not imputing to them their trespasses and sins. The whole Tenor and Design (you see) of the Evangelical Dispensation is to bring Sinners to their Saviour, to take them off from all their vain Confidences, to believe and trust only in the Lord Jesus; to beseech them to come to Christ, that they may be refresh'd and [illegible] into their Souls. And so I am brought to the Second Thing observable in the Text, and the Person to whom the Invitation is made; To him there is no one only Saviour and Redeemer, the Lord Christ [illegible].

2. We are not then to [illegible] our Necessities, or to present our Supplications and Prayers to Saints or Martyrs, to Patriarchs, Prophets, or Apostles, nor to the Blessed Virgin [illegible]. The Veteran [illegible] of the [illegible] in the *Romish* [illegible] Church [illegible]

* Mark 16. 15.

† 2 Cor. 5. 19.

Church are (as a Learned * Author of our own has shewn at large) sufficiently extravagant in the Honours they pay [illegible]. They exalt her above the Thrones [illegible] Cherubim and Seraphim, array her in the brightest Robes of [illegible] and Honour, and most religiously and devoutly Romance her into a Deity. Nay, this is not the Practice only of her private Authors, but the more Authentick Voice [illegible] her publick [illegible], in which they [illegible] involve her by the [illegible] of Mother of Mercy, Mother of [illegible] Parent of Mercy, Queen of [illegible] the Gate of the Great [illegible] of [illegible], and [illegible]

2. Now these (Sir) are [illegible] [illegible] Excesses [illegible] if [illegible] would [illegible] Blessed [illegible] than [illegible] of the [illegible] leges and [illegible] [illegible] and Blessed [illegible] her [illegible] and therefore [illegible] be [illegible] Dear to us [illegible] out all [illegible] but [illegible] her

* See a Discourse of the [illegible] Praise and Honour of the Virgin Mary, intituled, Speculum Beatæ Virginis.

* Dr. Reg. tom. 2. l. 1. c. 16.

† Cap. 63. v. 16.

* De Relig. tom. 2. l. 1. c. 10.

† Cap. 63. v. 16.

ven have no constant Knowledge of us, and of our Affairs; who are perfect Strangers to their Blood and Families.

Our Adversaries (I know) will be here ready to Object, That *Abraham* and *Israel* were rightly said by the Prophet to be ignorant, and to know nothing in his Time of the Affairs of Mankind, and consequently, that then indeed 'twas but in vain, and to no purpose, to pray to them, because before the Resurrection of our Lord, the Patriarchs were not admitted into Heaven, but lay only in *Limbo*, the Rem[illegible] and Secret Caverns of the Earth, where they were utterly [illegible] of God and likewise from all [illegible] and Commerce with Men. But that now the case is quite alter'd with them, [illegible] they are all translated from those Regions of Darkness, that State of [illegible] those Tabernacles of Hope, into the [illegible] Court of Heaven, the Kingdom of their Father, the Land of Division, where their Understandings are [illegible] widen'd and [illegible] that they have a particular [illegible] and perfect Knowledge of all [illegible] are done both in Heaven and [illegible] and consequently of all the [illegible] Concerns, Occurrences, and Affairs of every Mankind, [illegible] the proper Objects of our Devotion [illegible]

both

both privy to all our Neceſſities, and alſo as Fellow-Members of the ſame Myſtical Body, moſt willing and ready to here and aſſiſt us. But I anſwer,

1. That this Opinion of *Abraham* and *Iſrael's* being in *Limbo* only, and not in Heaven it ſelf before the Reſurrection of our Lord, is groundleſs and unwarrantable. *Elias*, we are ſure, was tranſlated into Heaven, and we know likewiſe, that *Moſes* came down with him from that place to converſe with our Lord upon the Mount. But if theſe his Sons were thought worthy, before the Reſurrection of our Lord, to be admitted into thoſe bliſsful Manſions; why not *Abraham*, the Father of the Faithful, and that Peculiar Friend of God; Why *Iſaac* and *Iſrael*, and the other Patriarchs and Prophets, who were all Heirs of the ſame great holy Faith, ſhould be excluded, I know not.

But ſuppoſing this Opinion was really as true as they would have it; and that we could not deny, (what you ſee, we have all the Reaſon in the World to deny,) that the Saints before the Reſurrection of our Lord lay only in *Limbo*, but are now in Heaven; yet that being there, they have a particular, entire, and perfect Knowledge of all things that are done in Heaven and Earth, and conſequently of all the Mod

Circum-

Circumstances, Concerns, Occurrences, and Affairs of every Man's Life, and so are become the Objects of our Devotion, is, I answer in the

2. Place a most unphilosophical, false, and impious Assertion that has no Foundation in Scripture, Reason, or Antiquity.

1. It has no Foundation in Scripture. Now to pray after any other manner than what Christ himself hath taught us, is not only Ignorance, but Sin, says* St. *Cyprian*. But what one place is there (I ask) in all his Scriptures, that demands this of us? which of all his Apostles, Evangelists, or Prophets, doth allow that any of the Saints departed should be invok'd by us? *Bannes*, a Learned Dominican, ingenuously confesses, that he knows not of any. His Words are as express and full as can be: *Orationes ad Sanctos faciendas neque etiam expressè neque involute Scripturæ docent*, *i. e.* that 'tis our Duty to Pray to the Saints the Scriptures do neither explicitely nor implicitely inform us. And those of his own Profession have never yet been able to shew that he is in an Errour.

*De Orat. Domin. pag. 139. Ed. Oxon.

2. This Assertion has no Foundation in Reason. For if the Saints in Heaven have a particular, entire, and perfect Knowledge of all things that are done in Heaven and Earth,

Earth, and consequently of all the Circumstances, Concerns, Occurrences, and Affairs of every Man's Life, and so are become the Objects of our Devotion, then this Knowledge of theirs is owing either

1. To their own Ubiquitary Presence, by vertue of which they see and hear all our Words and Actions, as some of our Adversaries affirm. Or,

2. As others, with the like Boldness, To their Perspicacity and Clear-sightedness, whereby they are able to discern our very Thoughts and Intentions. Or,

3. To the constant and faithful Relations of daily-attending Saints and Angels; as a [illegible] more modestly. Or,

4. At last, To the Vision of the Divine Essence, which they call *Beatifical Transient*. But all these ways are ridiculous and absurd, and some of them impious. For

1. The Saints in Heaven have not a particular, entire, and perfect Knowledge of all things that are done in Heaven and Earth, and consequently of all the Circumstances, Concerns, Occurrences, and Affairs of every Man's Life, and so are become the Objects of our Devotion, because they are every where present, and so see and hear all our Words and Actions. Heaven indeed is [illegible] Throne, and the Earth is his Foot-stool.

Hea-

Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him; but he fills all Places both in Heaven and Earth, and the imaginary Space too beyond the Limits of Both, he is a God near and present to us all; to those that abide in the Continent, and that remain in the broad Sea, and also that live afar off in the Ends of all the Earth. In a word, tho' he cannot be circumscribed or included in any Place, yet by his Immensity he is so every where present, as not to be excluded out of any; so that we may all of us, at one and the same time, pour out our Prayers and Praises unto him with full Assurance of being heard and accepted by him. For this Divine Being, Creator of all things, is not to be measured; so that the Greatness of God cannot be comprehended as the Greatness of Creatures can be limited. Wherefore since God, tho' infinite in his Perfection, is present to all things, and intimately (as the great Philosopher and Divine Aquinas acknowledges) even to the innermost Essence of them, and knows perfectly what they are, and how they are, and where they are, and when they are, and what they will be, and what they will not be, and what they can be, and what they cannot be, and what they have been, and what they have not been, and what they can have been, and what they cannot have been, and what they will have been, and what they will not have

self to all places, that 'tis always necessarily and unavoidably but in one. *Non est ubique, nec in pluribus locis, sed in uno loco tantùm*, as he speaks again in the same Paragraph. Great then only is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, because there is no End of his Greatness.

2. The Saints in Heaven have not a particular, entire, and perfect Knowledge of all things that are done in Heaven and Earth; and consequently of all the Circumstances, Concerns, Occurrences, and Affairs of every Man's Life, and so are become the Objects of our Devotion, from their Perspicacity or Clear-sightedness, whereby they are able to discern our very Thoughts and Intentions. This is plain from the Argument immediately foregoing; For since, according to the Laws of Creation, the Saints are all limited and circumscrib'd in their Essences and Perfections, it must necessarily be granted, that they are likewise limited and circumscrib'd in their Science or Knowledge; it being impossible for any Being but such as is Immense and fills all Places, to know the different Concerns of all the several Beings residing and acting in those different Places. God then alone (since it appears, that he only is Omnipresent) must be acknowledg'd to be

καρδιογνώστης;

καρδιογνώστης, the Searcher of the Hearts. In him indeed do our Souls and Beeses live, move, and have their Beings. He understands our Constitution, knows whereof we are made, the Composition (as I may so say) of our very Essences, and therefore discerns all the Motions and Operations of our Souls: In short, 'Tis his Prerogative alone to be about our Paths, and about our Beds, in our Hearts, and in our Spirits, and consequently to spy out all our Ways. Whence it likewise appears in the [illegible]

3. Place, That the Saints in Heaven have not a particular, entire, and perfect Knowledge of all things that are done in Heaven and Earth, and consequently of all the Circumstances, Concerns, Occurrences, and Affairs of every Man's life, and [illegible] become the Objects of our Devotion; from the constant and faithful Relations of daily ascending Saints and Angels; from the Informations and kind Intercourses of Guardian Angels, and the narrations of such happy Spirits, as leaving their Earthly Tabernacle daily ascend thither; because 'tis evident (you see) that there are many things here amongst us, which these Saints and Angels can never understand, many Designs and Contrivances, many Wishes and Desires, many Vows and Prayers, that are

lock'd only in the Heart, and consequently are known only unto God. Where-

4. The Saints in Heaven have not a particular, entire, and perfect Knowledge of all things, that are done in Heaven and Earth, and consequently of all the Circumstances, Concerns, Occurrences, and Actions of every Man's Life, and so are become adequate Objects of our Devotion, from the vision of the Divine Essence, which they call *Speculum Trinitatis*. Now 'tis a great Question amongst Learn'd Men, whether the Blessed Spirits above are indeed capable of seeing the Divine Essence, and many of the Schoolmen more espouse the Negative, thinking it as impossible for a Created Finite Being, to behold the Essence of an Uncreated Infinite Being, as 'tis for a Mole or Bat to gaze steddily upon the Sun. Which Opinion (if true) entirely destroys this *Speculum Trinitatis*, and defeats it with its Consequences, all to pieces upon the Ground. But, I confess, I hitherto see nothing that can induce me to embrace it, The Affirmative seems most consonant both to Scripture and Reason.

When *Moses* humbly desir'd, that God would vouchsafe to shew him his Glory, or

or to imprint upon his Mind a clear, distinct Idea of his Divine Essence, he was answer'd, That he could not have his wish now, whilst he lay under the Disadvantages of Mortality, because he was a God dwelling in such Light, as no Mortal Eye could approach; but that he should so far hereafter, when these Impedimenta [illegible] be remov'd, and he happy [illegible] the stronger Privileges of Immortality. Thou can'st not see my Face, says God, for there shall no man see me, and live. For these words certainly [illegible], Thou [illegible] could not now, by reason of the thick Veil of his flesh; yet that he should see his Essence hereafter, both when his [illegible] [illegible] and also, [illegible] all clarify'd and spiritual [illegible]

Exod. 33. 20.

Moses himself undoubtedly understood them thus: for had he thought otherwise, and that he was never to be admitted to the Intuition of his Maker's Glory, the naked, clear, and real Vision of his Divine Essence; but that he was for ever to rest in Symbols and Figures; in reflected Glories, and secondary Manifestations, (which was to find his Ultimate Happiness in some thing really distinct from his God) his devout, affectionate Soul, which so ardently

breath'd after the most intimate Fruition even of the Living God, would never have been satisfy'd with this uncomfortable Answer, but we had questionless heard of the sad Complaints, the bitter Bemoanings, and doleful Accents of his disconsolate Spirit, who, when the natural Bysis of her Desires mov'd necessarily towards God, trembling, continually, like the amorous Needle, for the Embraces of that most Lovely and Amiable Object, was yet for ever excluded from his Beatifick Presence, the Contemplation and Fruition of the interiour Beauties of his Beloy'd.

And indeed we all so naturally desire to see this Fiscal Cause, this Parent of Nature, and the Author of all our Beings, that they were surrounded with all the Sweets of Paradise, all the other most exquisite Delights and Entertainments that Heaven can afford, yet, without Him they would but fade and wither, and dwindle into nothing, and our restless, dissatisfy'd Spirits would still, in the midst of them all, be impatiently crying out, Ah! Where, Where is our God? For as He is the Fact of Beings, so is He the Fact of Ends: *Regum & Aequitatum* [illegible], says *Plato* rightly, that proper and principal End of Rational Beings, the Vision of whom alone can satisfie

So Thus far then have we said our Adversaries
[illegible] The Saints in Heaven do really
[illegible] and contemplate the Divine Essence.
But how to say, that they behold in it all
things that are done in Heaven and Earth,
and consequently all the Circumstances,
Contents, & Occasions, [illegible] of
every Man's life; and so even from the
Closet of our Devotion, is [illegible]
and ridiculous. If you let [illegible] down
into Matter, it will not be [illegible]
nature of its Capacity; but then, you
know, it must needs [illegible] because it is
impossible it should receive into its Bosom
the [illegible] of those innumerable
things, &c. which [illegible]
[illegible] they may
[illegible]
Effects [illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible] they are
ble [illegible]; but then
they [illegible]
lutely [illegible] would be wanted
[illegible]
[illegible]
[illegible]

the Divine Nature it self) is plain from the Instance of the Angels. These Blessed Spirits were before the incarnation of our Lord admitted into their Father's House, the Mansions of Glory, the Royal City of the Heavenly King. The time of their Probation was over and gone, and they all unalterably confirmed in a state of Happiness and Glory. Their Business and Employment was to contemplate the [illegible] Beauties of the Divine Countenance, and to sing continually in the Presence of the Lord, that Great is the Glory of their [illegible]. And yet how imperfect [illegible] how improvable the [illegible] of these Intelligences [illegible] the clear Vision of the [illegible] Mystery of [illegible] had from their Eye [illegible] satisfaction of the Sou[illegible] they had only [illegible] and obscure [illegible] of it. And though [illegible] St. Paul [illegible] of God is [illegible] Church [illegible] Epist. 1. 12.

Lord has put this case beyond all doubt; for speaking of the Day of Judgment: Of that Day and Hour, ‖ says he, knoweth no Man, no, not the Angels of Heaven, nor the Son, but my Father only. For if the Son of God himself, as Man, tho' he is to be the Umpire of that Great Day; and the Holy Angels, who always behold the Face of their Father, and who with unspeakable Alacrity and Joy will attend and wait upon him in this his glorious Expedition, was once and are still ignorant in this matter, then certainly it can be nothing but Folly and Madness to imagine, that the Spirits of Just Men and Women (which, tho' never so perfect as such, are, as they stand in Relation to their Bodies, to whom they have a natural Inclination, even in Heaven it self, but in a State of Imperfection) should so far excel, as to have an entire and perfect Knowledge of all things, that are done both in Heaven and Earth.

‖ Matth. 24. 36. & Mar. 13. 32.

Now then from what has been thus discours'd, I presume, 'tis Evident, that there is no Foundation in Reason to think, that the Saints (who in Heaven) have a particular, entire and perfect [illegible] of all things that are done in Heaven and Earth, and consequently of all the Circumstances, Concerns, Occurrences, and Affairs of

every

every Man's Life, and so are become the Objects of our Devotion, as our Adversaries pretend; but that on the contrary, we have all the Reason in the World to conclude, that they have no constant Knowledge of any thing here below; and consequently, that according to the *Romish* Doctors themselves, 'tis *etiam de Supervacaneum*, an idle, vain and superfluous, and according to Truth it self, an [illegible] wicked and idolatrous piece of Devotion, that is [illegible] to them. For tho' we allow, that God does sometimes of his special Grace vouchsafe by an Extraordinary Revelation to acquaint his Saints with something of our Affairs here below, like the good Shepherd in the Gospel, who [illegible] he had found the Sheep he had [illegible] inform'd his Neighbours of it, and [illegible] them together to [illegible] with him; nay, farther, tho' I cannot [illegible] much so grant, that the Saints in Heaven do not only intercede with God for the Church in general, that he would be favourable [illegible] vouchsafe [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[

tion of a Guardian Angel or possibly a short Errand of their own discovers to them, do (as * *Ignatius*, † *Origen*, ‖ *Cyprian* and ** others think they do) Pray for some of us in particular; yet since there is no certainty in this matter, no Revelation to inform us when this is done, or indeed whether it be so much as done at all; we cannot from such pious Conjectures only infer with the Council of *Trent*, that we ought to Pray to them, or make them the Mediators between God and our selves; especially since (besides the Arguments already alledg'd) God himself has expressly pronounc'd him Curs'd who thus trusteth in Man, and maketh Flesh his Arm, and whose Heart departeth from the Lord. All we are to do, is to Praise and Magnifie the Name of God for them that he has been pleas'd of his gracious Goodness to deliver their Souls from the Burthen of the Flesh, from the Waves and Storms of this tempestuous World, and to land them safely on the peaceful Harbour of Eternity. That he adorn'd and inrich'd them with his manifold Gifts and Graces, whereby they are rendered as burning and shining Light to his Church in improving Generations; That, I say, together with a Reverential Respect, and Study of Imitation, is all we have

* *Ep. ad Trall.* pag. 80. *Usser. Edit.*

† *De Orat.* sect. 34

‖ *De Mortalit.* pag. 166. Ed. Oxon.

** *Vid. Aug. Confess.* l. 9. c. 3. *Basil. Hom.* 20. *Ambros. de obitu Theod. Hieron. Ep.* 25.

have to do upon their Account; and This, we are sure, (whatever the *Trent* Doctors determine) was the only Inference the Primitive Church made from these Premises. τιμὴ τῶν Μαρτύρων ἐστὶ ζηλῶσαι τὴν ἀνδρείαν αὐτῶν. The Honour, says * S. *Chrysostom*, that we are to pay to the Martyrs, is to strike the same Lines, as those invincible Heroes have done; to copy out their Fortitude and Magnanimity, and with the like Chearfulness to lay down our Lives for the Lord's sake. And so I come to my 3. Particular, which is to shew, That as this Assertion has no Foundation in Scripture nor Reason; so, neither has it the least Support from Antiquity. *Spiritus Defunctorum*, † says St. *Austin*, *non videntur quæcunque eveniunt aut aguntur in vita gesta hominum*, i. e. The Spirits of the Saints departed, do not know all things that are Acted upon the Stage of the World. And * St. *Hierom*, speaking of his deceased Friend *Nepotianus*, is more particular: *Quicquid dixero*, says he, *quis ille non audit, mutum videtur; quocum loqui non possumus, de eo loqui non desinamus.* Whatever I shall say, seems dabab and to no purpose, because *Nepotian* does not hear me; yet since we can no more speak with him, let us be the longer in speaking of him.

I know

* *Vid. tom. 5. p. 625. Vid. & Eus. Hist. Eccl. Lib. c. 63. pag. 134, 135. & Aug. de Civit. Dei l. 8. c. 27. & l. 22. c. 10.*

† *De curâ pro mortuis.*

* *Ep. 3. de Epitaph. Nepot.*

I know the Fathers about the latter End of the Fourth Century in their Funeral and Anniversary Panegyricks of the Saints and Martyrs, frequently use very elegant and affectionate *Apostrophe's* to them, as tho' they suppos'd them present. But the Popish Abusers of this innocent Custom would do well to consider, that they most cautiously usher them in with *If's* and *And's*, as in that † of *Nazianzen*: Ἀκάη ἡ τῶν μεγάλου κωνσταντίνου ψυχὴ, ἢ τις αἴσθησις. Hear, O thou Soul of the Renown'd *Constantine*, if thou hast any sence or knowledge of these matters: For every Schoolboy will tell them, that this is only a Rhetorical Flourish, a pleasing Strain of Eloquence taken up by Orators in expressing their own, and moving the affections of others; but never us'd by any as a Form of Prayer, or a Mode of addressing their Devotions to the Deceas'd.

† *Orat. 1. cont. Julian.*

But we need not seek far for the Sence of Antiquity in this Matter. The Fathers have sufficiently declar'd their Opinion in their Controversie with the *Arians*. These Hereticks divested the Blessed Jesus of his Divinity; diminish'd and degraded him into a mere Creature, and yet held it lawful to pay him Religious Worship. This (tho' the *Arians* declar'd they worship'd

him

him only with an inferiour degree of Worship, parallel to what our Adversaries now call Δουλεία, not with Λατρεία, or that Degree, which is peculiar only to the Supreme God, was universally abhorr'd and detested by the Fathers, who look'd upon it as an impious Restauration of Pagan Idolatry. Διὰ τί οἱ Ἀρειομανῖται τοιαῦτα λογιζόμενοι καὶ νοοῦντες, says *Athanasius*, οὐ συναριθμοῦσιν ἑαυτοὺς μετὰ τῶν Ἑλλήνων· Καὶ γὰρ κακεῖνοι ὥσπερ οὗτοι τῇ κτίσει λατρεύουσι παρὰ τὸν κτίσαντα; *i. e.* Why do not these *Arians*, since they are of this Opinion, descend into the Class of the Unbelieving *Gentiles*? for they are all guilty of one and the same kind of Idolatry, Worshipping the Creature besides the Creator. But now if the *Arians* were thus peremptorily condemn'd by the Fathers for Idolatry, because they worshipp'd the Blessed Jesus, tho' but with Δουλεία, as they suppos'd him to be a Creature; then how is it possible for our Adversaries to escape the same Condemnation, who pay the same degree of worship to those we all know to be Creatures? The *Arians* suppos'd the Son of God to be a Creature, but were in the wrong; and therefore, tho' Formally Idolaters, according to their own mistaken Hypothesis, yet were they not Materially and Really so. But these Men know for certain,

certain, that the Saints they worſhip are indeed but Creatures, and therefore are as well Materially as Formally Idolaters. The *Arians* worſhipp'd the Son indeed as a Creature; but then not as an Ordinary, Inferiour Creature; but as the firſt, the moſt glorious, and the moſt excellent of all Creatures, by whom, as an Inſtrument, all the others were made, and yet were found Guilty; How then ſhall theſe Men eſcape, who worſhip in the ſame manner theſe ordinary, Inferiour Beings, whom we all know to be the Workmanſhip of his hands, as he is God.

But tho the Saints are to have no part or ſhare in our Devotions, yet may we not humbly preſent our petitions before the Exalted Thrones of Angels and Archangels? The Saints indeed were Perſons of like Paſſions with our ſelves, they had their Slips and Miſcarriages here upon Earth and now in Heaven ſtill bear the Marks and Badges of their Sins, being depriv'd of half of themſelves, their Bodies. But theſe Bleſſed, indefective Spirits are the Firſt-born Sons of the Heavenly King, the moſt Correct and Amiable Patterns of his Eſſential Purity and Holineſs, and certainly he expects we ſhould peculiarly honour them whom himſelf in ſo eſpecial a manner delights to honour.

Honour

Honour them indeed we will, and in the way most becoming such glorious and Exalted Beings. We will endeavour to copy out their heavenly Vertues, to transcribe their Heroick Exellencies, and to live like Angels here, that we may for ever live with them hereafter. But to pray to them to invoke them, to implore their Aid and Assistance in the time of our Need, is what neither they desire nor we can give. Ὅρα μὴ, *see not*, was the Heavenly Messengers abrupt and hasty prohibition to St. *John*, when dazzled and overcome by his Extraordinary Glory, he would erroneously have worshipp'd him for his Adorable Master; and he that dares do this, holds not the Head says * St. *Paul*; but vainly puft up by his fleshly Mind, degenerates (as the whole Laodicean † Council in its thirty fifth Canon truly declares) into the Abominable and Sacrilegious Rites of the Idolatrous *Jews* and *Gentiles*. For whatever Fig-leaves Men may sew together to cover their Nakedness withal, 'tis most certain, that they who in these Nations worshipp'd their *Baalim*, their *Dæmons*, or Angels most, did it upon the very same Principles, as our Adversaries do at this day. The ‖ *Pythagoreans*, ‖ *Platonists*, *de Dæmon. Socrat. & Grotium in 2. cap. Ep. ad* and

Rev. 19. 10. and 22. 9.

* Col. 2. 19.

† *Vid. Balsamon. Canon.* p. 841.

‖ *Vid. Plat. sym. Apul. Col.* v. 18.

and other Learned Heathens, will answer for themselves, and the Rabbins (as they are cited at large by the learned ‖ *Cudworth*) for both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, that they were always so far from thinking by such worship to derogate any thing from the Honour of the Lord *Jehovah*, whom (tho' under different Names) they all equally acknowledge to be the Common Father of Gods and Men, that they did verily believe he was highly pleas'd at that sort of Worship, which they gave these his Extraordinary Ministers; the Honour redounding chiefly to himself that made them; and also that he accepted their Humility, who duly sensible of their own Vileness and Unworthiness, dar'd not to approach his awful Majesty without the Introduction of such mighty Favourites, such Beloved Mediators. And yet (notwithstanding these so specious Pretences) our * Apostle expressly declares of the *Gentiles*, that when they knew God, they glorify'd him not as God; but were therefore vain in their Imaginations, because they worshipp'd the Creatures, tho' not as so many Supreme, Independent Beings; but only as Mediators of Intercession, διὰ τὰ πίστεως. Besides, the Creator, and the Prophets continually bait the *Jewish* Church for these things,

‖ *Intell. Syst.* p. 468, 469.

* Rom. 1.

things, with the foul and odious Name of Whore, Prostitute Whore, and Abominable Harlot. So that you see, 'tis the peculiar Honour, the incommunicable Prerogative of the Son of God (as the Learned † Father peremptorily and frequently inculcates) to be our Mediator, to receive our Devotions, and to intercede for us at the Right hand of the Father; *Prayer then shall be made only unto him, and daily shall he be praes'd. He is the way, the Truth and the Life, and no man can come unto the Father but by Him.* As in the Earthly Tabernacle the High-Priest only entered into the most Holy Place beyond the Veil, there to be an Agent with God for the People; so our only High-Priest, the Blessed Jesus has therefore by his own blood entred into the Holy of Holies, the Heavenly Tabernacle, that there he may appear in the Presence of God for us. He is that Angel with the golden Censer, who offers the Incense, the Prayers of the Saints, upon the golden Altar before the Throne; that Angel of the Presence, that Messenger of the Covenant, who is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him. Tho' therefore there be (as the Learn'd * Apostle observes) that are called Gods, yea ἀποὶ πολλοὶ, many Cele-

† Greg. conc. Cels. l. 3. p. 233. & l. 8. p. 382. 384. 398.

* 1 Cor. 8. 5.

stial and Soveraign Gods, according to the ‖ *Platonists*, who never interest themselves in the Affairs of Mankind; and Many subordinate and inferiour Lords, or *Dæmons*, whose Office (as you have heard) is to be Agents and Mediator between the Gods and Men; Yet shall no Man spoil me through this absurd Philosophy, and vain Deceit, which is only after the Tradition of Men, after the weak and beggarly Rudiments of the World, and not after Christ. For to us Christians, says the same * Apostle, there is but one (soveraign) God, the Lord of Heaven and Earth, and but one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus. This Himself confirms in that Dialogue between Him and the Angels, recorded by the Prophet. *Who is this*, say they in Rapture and Amazement, *that cometh from Edom, with died garments from Bozrah?* This, that is glorious in his Apparel, travelling in the Greatness of his Strength? *I, that speak in Righteousness*, answers our Lord, *mighty to save. But wherefore*, they humbly ask again, *art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat? I have trodden the wine-press alone*, says our Lord, *and of the People there was none with me. I alone am mighty to save, and*

‖ *Vid. Jamblich. de Myst. Ægypt. sect. 5. c. 17. & M. Ofyr. sub finem dissertationis primæ.*

* 1 Cor. 8. 6. *and* 1 Tim. 2. 5.

Isa. 63.

besides

besides me there is no Saviour. Good luck then have thou with thine Honour, O Lord; Ride on, because of the Word of Truth, of Meekness, and of Righteousness, and thy Right-Hand shall teach thee terrible things. Terrible things indeed for the Kings Enemies, who would have other Lords besides Thee to rule over them. But gracious and comfortable things for thy Servants, the Sheep of thy Pasture, who know thy Voice, and therefore come to thee, who alone canst give Ease to our Troubled Spirits, being that Lamb of God, which takest away the Sins of the whole World. And so I come to the third thing observable in the Text, *viz.* the Persons invited, who are All Penitent Sinners in general; *All ye that labour and are heavy laden.* All ye that sigh and groan, and are bow'd down, and ready to sink under the grievous burthen of your sins.

3. There is no Person, no Time, no Rank or Quality whatsoever that is excepted. God would have all Men come to the Knowledge of the Truth, and be saved, says the * Apostle; there's the Universality of the Persons: And the Time, the † Prophet tells us, is as universal; 'tis not now and then only; but *whensoever a wicked man turneth away from the wicked-*

* 1 Tim. 2. 4.

† Ezek. 18. 27.

ness that he hath committed, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Accordingly we find God, in the 55th of *Isa.* calling to all Sinners in general, without any Distinction of Circumstances, Ages, or Conditions, to come, and be reconcil'd to him. *Wash ye, make ye clean,* says he, *put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do well;* and then, tho' neither the Out-goings of the Morning, nor of the Evening, have prais'd me; but from the Height of your Youth to the Declensions of Old Age, you have been taken, and led Captive by your Sins at their will, I will do them all away: *Tho' they be as Scarlet, they shall be white like Snow; tho' they be red like Crimson, they shall be as wool.* And again, in the third of *Jeremiah*, he with infinite Tenderness and Affection courts his People to come to him, tho' they had most frequently revolted, and infinitely offended his Divine Majesty. They say if a Man put away his Wife, and she be joyn'd to another Man, she shall not return to her former Husband any more: *But thou hast played the harlot with many Lovers, yet return again to me, saith the Lord.* Thus Absolute and Universal are the Promises and Invitations God makes to Sinners.

Thus

Thus ſolemnly and pathetically does he declare (as you ſaw more at large in my Firſt General Head) his Good-will towards them; that he deſires not the death of any of them all; but had rather they would every one of them, from the Leaſt to the Greateſt, turn from their evil ways, and Live.

And yet we meet with ſome Perſons in the World, whoſe Ears are entirely ſtopped againſt this gracious and ravilhing Voice of the Heavenly Charmer. The Suggeſtions of Satan, or the Unhappineſs of an ill Conſtitution of Body, or the unwarrantable Aſſertions of ſome ill-natur'd, ſurly and melancholy Pſeudo-Prophets, or poſſibly all theſe three together, have plung'd their tender Spirits in the profoundeſt Depth of Amazement and Deſpair. They think they have committed a Sin unto Death, the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and therefore that Salvation belongs not to them; but that, tho' at preſent in different Manſions, they are reſerv'd, as well as the Devils, for Everlaſting Chains of Darkneſs at the Judgment of the Great Day. The Caſe of theſe Perſons is ſad and lamentable, and ſuch as calls for our Prayers, our Sorrow, and our utmoſt Aſſiſtance. And indeed for their ſakes I firſt made Choice of my Text, tho' the following obſervable

in it hath hitherto interrupted my Profecution of this Matter. Have Patience therefore now, I pray, whilſt for the Eaſe of ſuch afflicted Souls, and to prevent (through God's Bleſſing) ſuch dangerous Miſtakes in others, I inſiſt upon this Point.

Now the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt is generally thought to be irremiſſible, and our Saviour's Words ſeem to aſſert as much. *All manner of Sin and Blaſphemy*, * ſays he, *ſhall be forgiven unto Men: but Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall not be forgiven unto Men. And whoſoever ſpeaketh a word againſt the Son of Man, it ſhall be forgiven him: but whoſoever ſpeaketh againſt the Holy Ghoſt it ſhall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.* And again in † St. *Mark*, *Verily I ſay unto you, All Sins ſhall be forgiven unto the Sons of Men, and blaſphemies wherewith ſoever they ſhall blaſpheme, but he that ſhall blaſpheme againſt the Holy Ghoſt hath never forgiveneſs* ἀλλ' ἔνοχός ἐστιν αἰωνίου ἁμαρτήματος, but is obnoxious to the Sentence of Eternal Damnation. And yet S. *Chryſoſtom* among the Ancients, and ‖ *Maldonat*, ‖ *Grotius*, ‖ *Hammond*, and * *Taylor* amongſt the Moderns, are ſo charitable, as to think, that this Expreſſion, *ſhall not be forgiven*, is to be Underſtood with a Qualification; Impoſſibility in

* Matt. 12. 31, 32.

† Chap. 3. v. 28, 29.

‖ In Matt. 12.

* *Great Exemplar*, pag. 201.

in Scripture ſometimes denotes no more than an extream Difficulty. Thus our Lord expreſsly * declares, that *'tis eaſier for a Camel to go through the Eye of a Needle*, (which is abſolutely impoſſible) *than for a rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of God.* Yet he means not by this Aſſertion utterly to exclude all Rich Men from the Hopes of Heaven; but only ſignifies to us, that 'tis a very hard and difficult matter for them that truſt in Riches, ſaying to Gold, Thou art our Hope, and to the fine Gold, Thou art our Confidence, ever to undertake the ſeverer Diſcipline of the Goſpel here, and conſequently to be made Partakers of his Glory in the Kingdom of Heaven hereafter. *How hard is it*, ſays he to his aſtoniſh'd Diſciples; *for them that truſt in Riches, to enter into the Kingdom of God.* In like manner, (ſay theſe Learned Men) when he poſitively aſſerts, that all Sins and Blaſphemies whatſoever ſhall be forgiven unto Men, but that the Blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall never be forgiven, he means not, that 'tis abſolutely impoſſible it ſhould ever be forgiven; but only, that it ſhall not be forgiven ſo eaſily, but more hardly, and with greater Difficulty, than any other Sin or Blaſphemy whatſoever. *Non ait quod remitti non poſſit,*

* Mark 10.

possit, as the fore-cited Jesuit; not that it cannot be forgiven at all; but because they who commit it, *nullam peccati sui excusationem habent*, are utterly destitute of all Apologies and Excuses, and therefore are more unpardonable than other Men.

I confess, I can determine nothing in this matter, whether this Sin be irremissible or not; I can only answer with the humble Prophet, *Lord, thou knowest.* God's gracious dealing indeed with *David* after his Adultery and Murther, with *Peter* after his Denial of his Master, with *Paul* after his persecuting the Church, and with a thousand other Sinners of the same Magnitude, obligeth me to believe, that there is no Sin or Blasphemy whatsoever which is irremissible in respect of God; and that therefore if the Sin against the Holy Ghost be indeed irremissible, 'tis only because it utterly excludes those who commit it, from Repentance.

But tho I dare not be positive as to the Consequences of this Sin; yet (what is a greater matter of Comfort to despairing Souls) I may venture to affirm, that, as to the Nature of it, 'tis such as cannot be committed by any Christian. If you ask me what 'tis, I briefly answer, That 'tis a

Total

Total Apoſtaſie, and Final Falling away from Chriſt and his Goſpel. I ſay, a Total Apoſtaſie, and Final Falling away. And yet not every Total Apoſtaſie, and Final Falling away neither; For 'tis poſſible a poor, ignorant Soul may be ſo deluded, as to Apoſtatize from Chriſtianity to Mahometiſm, or ſome other Impoſture, and yet ſtill believe Chriſt to have been a very good Man. But this is ſuch a Total Apoſtaſie, ſuch a Final Falling away from Chriſt and his Goſpel, as is attended with the greateſt Virulency, Rancour, Spight and Malice againſt both as can be imagin'd. When a Man not only utterly renounceth the known Truth, but alſo doth hate and abhor Chriſt and his Word; doth revile and ſpit upon him; doth with the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* crucifie and mock him; and is ſo far from acknowledging him to be the Son of God, or indeed ſo much as a good Man, who did all his Miracles by the Power and Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit, that he moſt maliciouſly and deſpitefully, after full Conviction of his Conſcience to the contrary, pronounceth him the greateſt of Cheats, a moſt grand Impoſtor, the Eldeſt Son of the Devil, who acted only by Commiſſion from *Beelzebub*, the Prince of the Devils.

This

This seems to be plain from our Saviour's own Words, when he mention'd this Sin. *There was brought unto him,* says the Evangelist, *one possess'd with a Devil, blind and dumb: and he heal'd him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.* The People, amaz'd at this great Miracle, gave Glory to him; confessing him to be, in very deed, the promis'd Messiah, the Son of *David.* But the *Scribes* and *Pharisees,* mov'd with envy; tho' they knew the Miracle to be the Effect only of the Spirit of God; yet, to lessen his Reputation among the People, declar'd, against their own Consciences, that 'twas not by any Divine Authority; but purely by Vertue of a black Confederacy with the Infernal Powers, that he did these things. *This Fellow,* say they with unparallel'd Rancour and Disdain, *does not cast out Devils, but by Beelzebub the Prince of the Devils:* Upon this says our Lord, *All Sins shall be forgiven unto the Sons of Men, and Blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme; but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation:* And then is added the Reason of this Assertion; (which plainly shews what the Sin against the Holy Ghost is) in these words, because they said, *He hath an unclean Spirit.* Now

Matth. 12. compar'd with Mark 3.

Now then (My Brother) do'st thou believe and confess, That our Lord Jesus Christ is, in very deed, the Eternal Son of the Living God? That when he was here upon Earth he acted only by Commission from his Father; and that the Mighty Works which did shew forth themselves in him, were done by the Vertue and Power of his own most Holy Spirit? If thou dost, then be of good cheer, that hast not yet, and as long as thou continuest in this Faith, thou canst not commit this Sin against the Holy Ghost. Nothing now, but thy Impenitence, can separate between thee and thy God. Thou hast his own word for't: *All sins and blaspemies whatsoever shall be forgiven unto the Sons of Men*; tho' perhaps this Sin against the Holy Ghost (which thou hast not committed) shall never be forgiven. Break off thy sins then by Repentance, and they shall all be forgiven thee, Depart out of *Babylon*, and come to Christ; and thou shalt be refresh'd, and find Rest unto thy Soul. And so I come to the Last Thing observable in my Text, *viz.* the Benefit of accepting our Lord's Invitation; *I will give you Rest.*

4. What joyful Tidings are these? What Ease is here to wounded Consciences? what Comfort to Despairing Sinners? * *Lo the Winter*

* Cant. 2. v. 11, 12.

Winter (that dismal time, wherein Ignorance, Error, and Superstition, like Floods in the Winter-season, overflow'd the earth) *is past, and the Rain* (those cloudy, uncomfortable days, wherein we could see, and enjoy but little of him) *is over and gone*: All the tokens of a new World appear, and invite us to come and partake of heavenly joys and pleasures. *The Flowers appear on the Earth*; All manner of Blessings spring up in abundance, now the Sun of Righteousness is risen upon us. *The time of the singing of Birds is come, and the voice of the Turtle is heard in our land*: The heavenly Host sing for Joy, and excite all Mankind to praise their Saviour with joyful Lips. Is then thy Soul full of Sorrow and Heaviness, and drooping under the Apprehensions of thine approaching Judgment. Does thy Conscience tell thee, That Hell is thy Portion; and thine Inheritance in the Land where Death reigns for ever and ever? Is this, I say, thy case? Why, do not any longer despond, but throw away thy Garments, thy Sins, that encompass thee about, and rise up, for thy Saviour calls thee. Behold, the Wise Men rise up at his Call; they acknowledge his gracious Summons, and hastily come away from a far Country; and therefore

fore are kindly receiv'd, tho' their * Witchcrafts and Idolatries are so many. The humble Shepherd likewise obey the Heavenly Vision; as soon as the Angels are gone to Heaven, they leave their feeble Flocks, and tender Lambs, and therefore are graciously admitted to the Presence and Adoration of the great Shepherd of their Souls. The Star out of *Jacob* is risen upon thee also, and and if thou wilt follow its Light, 'twill conduct thee to the Mansions of thy Lord and Saviour. The Glory of the Lord too is ready to shine round about thee; the abundant Visitations of his Grace from Heaven will (if thou art willing) dispell the uncomfortable Darkness of the Night; all the black Clouds of Melancholy and Sorrow, and enlighten thy Understanding, and actuate all thy Faculties, [illegible] they happily bring thee to [illegible] to the Presence and Embraces of the Holy Jesus. Come then, I say, thou sinking, despairing Soul, unto thy Saviour. Come to him, by Faith and Repentance, and he will by no means cast thee off. Come to him, and he will most tenderly receive thee. The Bowels of his Compassion will immediately move towards thee; and he will gently take thee by the hand, and guide thee into the way, that leads to Sion.

'Twas

* *Vid. Justin. M. Dial. cum Tryph. Jud. pag.* 304. & *Orig. cont. Cels. lib.* 1. p. 45, 46.

'Twas his Meat and Drink, when he liv'd amongst us to proclaim Liberty to the Captives; to loosen those, whom Sin and Satan has bound; to bind up the Broken-hearted; to give Medicines to heal their Sicknesses, and to preach the acceptable Year of the Lord. And tho' now he is gone to Heaven; yet he has not left thee out fortless. He is abstracted from thee as to his bodily Presence; but, his Divine Spirit and Grace still attend and wait upon thee. Nor all the Glories of Heaven, the Alleluiahs of the Angels, and the triumphant Songs of the Saints, can make him forget thee; but the same Tenderness of Spirit, the same Mercy and Loving-kindness which [illegible] he now in the [illegible] of [illegible] Glories, still retains for [illegible]. We have not such an High Priest [illegible] Apostle, as cannot be [illegible] of our Infirmities [illegible] who [illegible] tempted himself, is able to succour them that are tempted. He sits in these [illegible] Mansions at the Right hand of the Father, to make intercession for us. His Merits continually plead the Pardon of Repenting Sinners at the Throne of Grace, and he is able and willing to save all there to the utterest [illegible] come unto God by him: Nay, [illegible] his

Glory,

Glory, his Joy, and Crown, to forgive Sins; 'Tis the reward of his Sufferings, the Recompence of his Agonies, to Save Sinners. This he so ardently desires and thirsts after, that he breaks not the bruised Reed, nor quencheth the smoaking Flax; but still more and more softens and mollifies the relenting Heart, till he sends forth Judgment unto Victory. He cannot be always chiding, neither keepeth he is Angry for ever; but tho' he cause Grief, yet will he have Compassion, according to the multitude of his Mercies. Thus when *Ephraim* turn'd and repented, when he smote upon his Thigh, and was ashamed for the reproachful Sins of his Youth, how tenderly, how [illegible] deal with him; [illegible] *dear Son* [illegible] *Ephraim* is indeed my dear Son, [illegible] most pleasant Child; [illegible] *him, I do earnestly* [illegible] *therefore my bowels are* [illegible] *will surely have mercy* [illegible] *Lord.* In the same manner when [illegible] deeply sensible of her Sins, [illegible] solate, and said within her [illegible] *hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath* [illegible] *ten me*, he earnestly protests to her, that his Heart was more tender of her than the

* Jer. 31. 20.

Heart of any Parent could be of the Child or Infant of her own Womb. *Can a Woman,* * says she, *forget her sucking Child, that she should not have compassion on the Son of her Womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands.* Nay farther is so plea'd at the Return of a Sinner that he assures us, there is Joy in Heaven over such a One; yea more Joy among the Angels of God over one Sinner that repentem, than over Ninety and Nine Just Persons, who need no Repentance. When a lost Sheep of the house of Israel is found; when it is rescu'd out of the Jaws of [illegible] and of Hell; Snatch'd out of the Paw of that [illegible] Lion who continually [illegible] to may devour, and [illegible] into the Fold of the [illegible] the Lord Christ Jesus; [illegible] are no sooner ac[illegible] they take into their [illegible] of Musick, and in the highest [illegible] of Seraphick Joy con[illegible] his Return. The Vallies (to speak [illegible] Bishop *Taylor*) are no [illegible] fill'd with Benediction, and a fruit[illegible] Shower from Heaven; but these Mountains leap with Joy, even the Joy of Conquerors. This he has [illegible] represent-

* Isa. 49. 15.

ed

ed to us in the Parable of the Prodigal. He had moſt grievouſly tranſgreſs'd his Duty in every point, both to God and Man. When his indulgent Father, upon his Requeſt, had kindly Divided his Living between Him and his Brother; expecting, you may be ſure, no ſmall Comfort and Satisfaction from the joynt Welfare and Happineſs of his dutiful Children; this ungrateful and inhumane Wretch not many days after gathers all together, and gets him away into a far Country, where forgetful of his moſt tender Father, forgetful of his ſorrowful Relations, forgetful of his moſt gracious God, he lies wallowing in the Mire of all Filthineſs and Debauchery, miſpending his precious hours in the Converſation and Careſſes of ſhameleſs, proſtitute, abominable Strumpets, and waſting all his Subſtance in a moſt profligate, brutiſh, and riotous way of living. Yet no ſooner does his Father ſpy him returning home, with a penitent Confeſſion in his Mouth; but (notwithſtanding his great Unworthineſs) his Bowels are mov'd towards him: yea, he becomes impatient, cannot expect his near Approach; but his Joy and Affection give him wings. Whilſt he is yet a great way off, he runs, he flies to meet him; has not Patience to ſtay for his humble Con- Luke 15.

 feſſion;

feſſion; but immediately, in an Extaſie of Joy, falls upon his Neck, forgives and kiſſes him. The beſt Robe, the fatteſt Calf, Muſick, and Dancing, all the Expreſſions of the moſt ſolemn and extraordinary Joy are hardly enough to entertain him.

Now then (my diſconſolate Brother) who would not rather thus cauſe Joy to the Bleſſed Choires above by a ſincere and hearty Repentance, than by a Sullen, unwarrantable Deſpair pleaſe the profeſs'd Enemies of God and Man, the Spirits of Darkneſs? Who (I ſay) would not rather, by a timely Repentance, be the occaſion of a Jubilation and Feſtival both in Heaven and Earth; than by cauſing Grief in both delight the ſullen and deſtructive Powers of the Kingdom of Darkneſs? A Jubilation, I ſay in Heaven and Earth too: For ſee, thy Mother the Church, is highly concern'd for thee; ſhe mourns and laments thy unhappy State, and daily offers up Prayers and Tears for thy Recovery. She longs to ſee thee come boldly into her Courts, there with all her faithful Sons and Daughters to worſhip the God of our Joy and Gladneſs; and to ſing merrily, and to make a chearful noiſe unto the God of *Jacob*. Let then the Prayers and Tears of thy afflicted Mother; let the Hearty Concern, and paſſionate

ſionate Wiſhes of the kind Spirits above, let the moſt gracious and tender Promiſes of Pardon which Truth it ſelf has made thee, work thee out of this groundleſs, this unaccountable State of Deſpondency. Thou muſt not, thou can'ſt not ſurely, after all this, deſpair. Thy Saviour tells thee, thou art not thine own; but His. He made thee at firſt, when thou waſt nothing; and when thou waſt loſt and worſe than nothing, He Redeem'd thee too with his own blood, and moſt ſolemnly ſwears he would not have thee periſh. Wilt thou not then believe Him, who hath done ſo many and great things for thee? Wilt thou not believe Him, who could even bleed and die for thee? If any Man of known Integrity had given thee his word thou wouldſt not Scruple to believe him: How then can'ſt thou thus affront thy God who cannot lye, by thy Infidelity; when he not only ſays, but alſo ſwears, he would have thee live? O! do not, do not thus evacuate all the gracious Methods the Heavenly Father is pleas'd to uſe for thy Recovery; Do not thus fooliſhly exclude thy ſelf from Happineſs, when God does not exclude thee. Alas! Thy God is Omnipotent, and can moſt eaſily perform all his Promiſes, and therefore he needs not de-

ceive thee. He is good and gracious, and therefore he will not deceive thee. With him is no Variableneſs, or ſhadow of Turning; but he is the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for ever, and therefore he cannot deceive thee. Obey then his gracious Call; come to him; throw thy ſelf into his Arms; proſtrate thy ſelf with all due Humility at his feet; offer to him thy broken and contrite Spirit; beg him to accept thee, who never yet refus'd any, and he will moſt gladly receive thee. Tho' thou art never ſo heavy-laden, he will give thee Reſt. He will eaſe thee of thy burthen; he will pardon thy ſins; he will quiet thy Conſcience here, and give thee everlaſting Reſt and Happineſs hereafter.

Which God, of his infinite Mercy, Grant unto us all, through the Merits and Mediation of Jeſus the Belov'd. To whom, &c.

Ser. 7.

A

DISCOURSE

Upon the

Fifth of November.

PSAL. cxviii. Ver. 24.

This is the Day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoyce and be glad in it.

THIS *Pſalm* is ſuppos'd to have been compil'd by the Royal Pſalmiſt, when, after a long Series of Troubles and Perſecutions, he was at laſt both ſafely plac'd upon the Throne of *Iſrael* and *Judah*, and had

alſo ſubdued the proud Lords of the *Philiſtines*, together with their Allies and Confederates; * who, in hopes to have cruſh'd him before he grew too powerful, had rally'd their Forces, and invaded the Land. He had long grappled with the indefatigable Malice of his envious, blood-thirſty Maſter; long encountered the fierce Oppoſitions of Enemies abroad, but eſpecially of Adverſaries at home, ſome of which (as he complains *Pſalm* 64.) were Men of ſuch ſneaking, ſlaviſh, mercenary Souls; of ſuch beggarly, diſingenuous, unmanly Spirits, that not daring to appear in the Gallantry of open Enemies, they betook themſelves to the little Arts of ſkulking Revenge; endeavouring by all the ſiniſter methods of clancular hatred, by a long train of ſecret Calumnies and Reproaches, to blow up his reputation, and at one Blaſt to deprive him both of Life and Crown. But now at length had the good hand of Providence put a joyful period to all theſe Troubles and Afflictions, and made him glad with the Joy of his Countenance. His haughty Neighbours humbly pay him Homage, and he tramples upon the Necks of his Domeſtick Adverſaries. The Greatneſs of his Dangers endear him to the People, who from his ſo many miraculous Eſcapes, con-

* 2 Sam. 5.

clude

clude him the Peculiar Favourite of Heaven and therefore receive him with the hearty and joyous Reiterations of Acclamations and Hosanna's. Wherefore in a due sense of these great blessings, he is not contented to offer only his own Sacrifice of Praise, but likewise in the beginning of this *Psalm* excites all the people with their Doxologies and Allelujahs to assist and joyn with him in these his grateful acknowledgments. *O give thanks unto the Lord*, says he, *for he is gracious because his mercy endureth for ever. Let all the Tribes of Israel, let the Priests and Levites; yea let All them, that fear the Lord, confess, that he is gracious, and that his mercy endureth for ever.* You need not recount the Wonders he shew'd for your Forefathers in the Land of *Egypt* nor recall to your Memories how after a Succession of Mracles for forty years in the Wilderness, he at last with a mighty Hand and stretch'd-out Arm drove out the Nations before them, and gave them this pleasant Land for an Inheritance; Look only upon me, and you will see a most lively Instance of his Mercy and Goodness. For when mine Enemies swarm'd about me like Bees, and as one Man, conspir'd with all their Might and Cunning to throw me down from the Throne to which I was

advanc'd; when I was invaded by vaſt Multitudes from abroad, and undermin'd by the ſecret Treacheries and Machinations of more dangerous Adverſaries at home; even then, when there ſeem'd no poſſible way for my Eſcape, was the Lord my Helper, and is become my Strength, and my Song, and my mighty Salvation. So that the Stone which theſe unskilful Builders would have rejected, as unfit to be uſed, is, you ſee, become the head-ſtone in the Corner, whilſt (notwithſtanding all the Attempts of mine Enemies to the contrary) I ſit this day ſafely on my Fathers Seat. Now then, if ever, preſent your ſelvēs joyful before the Lord the King, and come with me into his Courts in the voice of Thankſgiving; for This, of all others, is the Day which the Lord himſelf hath made; we will therefore rejoyce and be glad in it.

Thus you have, in ſhort, the occaſion of theſe Words, which I ſhall no longer inſiſt upon, as they reſpect the circumſtances of *David*; but conſider them wholly, as they reflect Luſtre upon the Solemnization of this preſent Day. A Day, which, if any, may moſt properly be ſaid to be made by the Lord, ſince it bears the liveliest Characters and Impreſſes of his Power and Knowledge, of his Wiſdom and Goodneſs,

and

and of all those other glorious Attributes whereby we are assur'd, that he governs the World. For trace the Histories of ancient Times, turn over all Authors both Sacred and Prophane, and (the Day of our Spiritual Redemption excepted) produce me a Day like This, so memorable in its Circumstances, so glorious in its Issue, and so unparallell'd in its Consummation. Of all those Deliverances God in past Ages vouchsaf'd his Church, methinks none ever amounted to the Wonder of this Day, when I consider;

1. The black and dismal nature of the Design, which was this Day fram'd against us. And,

2. The Strangeness and Unexpectedness of our Deliverance from it.

1. I say, It will appear, that of all those Deliverances God in past Ages vouchsaf'd his Church, none ever amounted to the Wonder of this Day; and consequently, that this Day, of all others, may most properly be said to be made by the Lord, if we consider the black and dismal nature of the Design, which was this Day fram'd against us. As the Heavens rejoyc'd and the Earth was glad to see the glory of the Lord in the uncorrupted Light of the Gospel after a long Night of Ignorance and

Superstition

Superſtition ariſe in Brightneſs upon us; ſo thoſe reſtleſs Spirits, who always bore Evil-will to our *Zion*, as though they had receiv'd a ſecond Downfall, in their undiſcerned Habitations vented themſelves in nothing, but Lamentations, and Mournings, and Woe. They ſaw the unparallell'd Beauty of her Countenance, which, tho' long maſk'd and clouded with the Veil of Widowhood, did now at length break forth in ſuch Splendour and Brightneſs, that the *Gentiles* were coming to her Light, and Kings to rejoyce in the Brightneſs of her Riſing. That therefore in this holy Mountain there was no Den for ſuch Beaſts of Prey, but that they muſt either forego their beloved Dainties, and peaceably lie down in the Paſtures with the Lamb, or for their own Security betake themſelves to harder feeding in the barren Receſſes of the Wilderneſs. Wherefore, impatient both of Reſtraint and Exile, they incontinently breathed out our Deſtruction; and to ſupport and underprop their ſinking Intereſt, at ſundry Times, and in divers Manners, endeavour'd to overturn the Foundations of our Felicity; ſometimes, with the factious Son of *Sheba*, they blow'd the Trumpet of Rebellion, diſclaim'd their Right in *David*, and endeavoured by good

Words,

Words, and fair Speeches, to perſwade others alſo, that they likewiſe had no Inheritance in the King. Sometimes, on the contrary, by the terrible Aſſaults of Anathema's, Curſes, and Excommunications, they laboured to ſcare and fright us into a Compliance. But when they found, that (notwithſtanding all their Craft and Subtlety) their Deſigns were ſtill defeated and unravell'd, and all their moſt cunningly contriv'd Enterpriſes dwindled into continual Diſappointments; that their ratenous, woolfiſh Nature, tho' never ſo cloſe cover'd with Sheeps-cloathing, was always diſcovered, and that none therefore dar'd to come in to their Standard, nor, tho' led on by the Infallible Hero himſelf, to enter the Field againſt the Lords Anointed; ſo that neither their Armado's from *Spain*, nor falſe Witneſſes from St. *Omers*, nor all thoſe dreadful Thunderings and Lightnings from *Rome* could prevail any thing at all; but that the Virgin, the Daughter of *Zion*, deſpis'd them and laugh'd them to ſcorn, the Daughter of *Jeruſalem* ſtill ſhook her head at them; as Men even encouraged by Diſappointments, and emboldned by Repulſes they ſtart anew, and rather than be for ever fruſtrated, are contented to deveſt themſelves utterly of their Humanity, and to embark

embark into so barbarous, so savage a Design, as will make the ears of all Posterity to tingle. Many Waters cannot quench their burning Rage, neither can the Floods, how deep soever, drown their Fury; but they resolve to tear in pieces the more excellent Prey, and one way or other to take their Pastime in Rivers of Royal Blood. *Flectere si nequeunt Superos* —Since Heaven and Earth, Angels and Men, are against them they descend into the Regions of Darkness and Obscurity, as if they design'd to ask Counsel of the Powers of Darkness. And indeed whoever accurately contemplates the nature of this cursed Design, must needs acknowledge it to bear all the marks of a hellish, diabolical Off-spring. For where, but in the dismal Regions of everlasting Malice and Cruelty, could be hatch'd so barbarous, so villainous a Conspiracy? A Conspiracy so black and detestable, so hideous in its Circumstances, so fatal in its Consequences, that 'tis hardly possible to imagine, that it could have been invented by Man, unless (what the *Jews* of old thought of their *Dæmoniacks*) they had really been converted into the Nature and Substance of fierce, implacable, destructive *Dæmons*. A Conspiracy, which, if it had taken effect, would have utterly extinguish'd the Light of our *Israel*, and overspread the Nation

again

again with thick Darkneſs of Ignorance and Superſtition: which would have murdered the Lord's Anointed, and accompliſh'd the ſavage Tyrants moſt execrable Wiſh; at one Blow cutting off the Head even of three Kingdoms; nay in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, have entirely deſtroy'd both Root and Branch, King and Parliment, Prince and People, Peers and Prelates, Lords and Commons. A Conſpiracy, that would have involv'd us all in Blood, expoſed our Wives and Children to the mercileſs Fury of our Enemies, and enſlav'd our Lives and Fortunes, Souls and Bodies, to the imperious and domineering Lords of monopolizing *Rome*. Laſtly, A Conſpiracy it was whoſe teeming Womb was ready to bring forth the ghaſtly Iſſue of Blood and Fire, and pillars of ſmoak, which would either have rendered our beautiful Cities a Wilderneſs, or (which is worſe) an Habitation of Dragons, and made *Jeruſalem* a Deſolation. Alas! Theſe unrighteous and cruel Men did not deſign only to ſhake off the Leaves, or to lop off the Branches of this fruitful Vine, but entirely, to pluck her up by the Roots * Ἐκκενοῦτε, Ἐκκενοῦτε ἕως τῆς θεμελίων, *Lay her waſt, and down with her even to the ground, was all the Cry.* So that not only our

* Pſ. 137. 7.

our Land would have mourn'd for the Loss of her Gracious Soveraign, our Cities of their wise and prudent Governours, our Countries of their vigilant and powerful Guardians (which alone would have rendred us the Wonder and Astonishment of Men and Angels) but (which is yet worse, if any thing can be worse) our pure and undefil'd Religion had also been lost in the general Devastation. Those insatiable flames, which had devour'd her noble Patrons, would likewise unmercifully have prey'd upon her drooping Vitals, till they had rarify'd her Substance into a mere empty Shadow, and chang'd the Spirituality of her Worship into external, cumbersome, impertinent Ceremonies. In short, Whatever the very Quintessence and Elixir of all villainy and Barbarity, of Superstition and Idolatry, of Mischief and Immanity could have impos'd upon us, must (unless the Almighty hand of God would have wrought a Miracle for their Rescue and Deliverance) have been endured by our Posterity throughout all Generations; so that this Church, (I say) which is now the Perfection of Beauty, and the Joy of the wholy Earth, had unhappily become the very Scorn and Derision of her Enemies, and their Song all the day long. But

(Blessed

(Bleſſed be God) our Soul is eſcap'd, as a Bird out of the Snare of the Fowler, the Snare is broken, the Deſign blaſted, the Plot unravelled, and we thereby moſt wonderfully delivered. Which brings me to my Second Particular, which is to ſhew, that it will likewiſe appear, that of all the Deliverances God in paſt Ages vouchſaf'd his Church, none ever amounted to the Wonder of this Day; and conſequently, that this Day, of all others, may moſt properly be ſaid to be made by the Lord, if we conſider the Strangeneſs and Unexpectedneſs of our Deliverance.

2. Many and glorious (I confeſs) have been the Deliverances which God in paſt Ages has vouchſaf'd his Church. He has often defeated the Deſigns, infatuated the Counſels, and brought to nought the Devices even of her moſt powerful Enemies, upholding her, when juſt ſinking by the hand of his Providence. But yet when I ſeriouſly reflect upon the diſmal Circumſtances of this Day's Deſign, how ſecret the Conſpiracy, how little Proſpect of a diſcovery, and how ready the Execution, I am forc'd to acknowledge, that This, of all others, was the Lord's own doing and that 'tis altogether marvellous in our eyes: The Church of God indeed, in the *Perſian* Monarchs

narchs time, was destin'd to Ruine, and the black Decree seal'd with the King's own Signet. But then (you know) the Design was divulg'd, and the Day of Slaughter deferr'd, so that the *Jews* had time to contrive means for their Preservation, which accordingly we find they did, and turn'd the fatal Stroke upon the Heads of their Enemies. The Primitive Christians likewise were often persecuted and devoted to Death. But then they always, with the Prophet, foresaw the Cloud that threatned them. The Emperours were Heathens, and so they could expect no better Usage from them, and consequently had warning to provide for themselves. But now the case of our Church was quite different at this time. Her Security was her greatest Danger, and her implicit Faith like to have ended in her Ruine. No Storm threatned from abroad, neither did any Cloud seem to gather over our Heads at home; but our Air was as serene and quiet, as free from Storms and Tempests, as the superlunary Regions. The Mercy of our peaceful Sovereign, like the Sun-beams, did (as we shall see more at large by and by) so plentifully diffuse its kind Heat and Warmth to all sorts of Men, that 'twas generally thought, he had melted the obdurate and

inflexible

inflexible Hearts of his moſt virulent enemies into reciprocal Tenderneſs, Loyalty and Obedience. But, alas! the Event moſt truly Demonſtrated, that ſome of his beſt Subjects did not more frequently than juſtly tell him, that he was merciful even to a Fault; and kind, tho' it were to his own and the Kingdoms Danger. For when by theſe Means we were too eaſily perſwaded, that our Enemies were reconcil'd to us, and become our Friends, ſo that we ſhould never ſee the Sons of the Giants returning to defie our *Iſrael* any more; and upon this account not only intoxicated our ſelves with preſent pleaſure, but entertain'd our thoughts likewiſe with the fair, delightful Proſpect of our future Felicity. Even then I ſay, when we thought our ſelves moſt ſecure, was the Enemy within our Walls, and the fatal Sword hanging over our Heads. The Snares of Death encompaſs'd us about, and our Souls were even hard at Deaths door. Strangers ſought after our Life, and we knew it not; yea they had caught us in their Nets, yet we perceived it not. There was indeed in the Kingdom a confus'd Notion, and obſcure Knowledge of ſome great thing, that was ſuddenly to be done; But then, as King *James* aſſures us, 'twas only amongſt the

* K. *James*'s Works, pag. 291.

the *Papists*, who likewise, for secrecies sake, were not to be intrusted with the Particulars. But that the King and Parliament were to be destroy'd, and that by the quick dispatch of Gun-Powder. That the Enemy had so long sate brooding upon this wicked Design, that the direful Off-spring was almost come to the birth: This was a thing of that nature, that no Protestant either fear'd, or so much as suspected it. 'Twas lock'd up only in the Breasts of the Conspirators, who likewise, for the greater Concealment, had bound themselves by an Oath of Secrecy; yea, under the seal of the Holy Sacrament, not to reveal it directly nor indirectly to any without common Consent. So that as to all external Helps, our Case was as desperate as possibly it could be, and we were even, like Sheep, bound ready for the Slaughter.

Now then, did our own Strength or Policy bring Salvation to us, or our own Right-arm obtain us this Victory? Did the wisdom of the Kings Counsellours, the Care of his Magistrates, the Subsidies of his Friends, the Fidelity of his Servants, or the Courage of his Soldiers work for him this Deliverance? No. We only stood, still and saw the Salvation of God. Tho'

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our hands were tied, God fought from Heaven for us, the Stars in their courſes fought againſt our Enemies. When the Harveſt was come, and they were juſt putting in the Sickle, he turn'd the Edge againſt themſelves, and cut them down in their Wickedneſs. He ſo infatuated their Counſels, and turn'd their deepeſt Policy like *Achitophel*'s into ſo great Fooliſhneſs, that when they might ſecurely have let in the Floods upon us, they turn'd the Stream directly againſt themſelves, ſo that the Waters went over their own Soul: Had they but gone on with the ſame Privacy they began, and not ſuffered the direful Project to wander beyond the Limits of their own Breaſts it had undoubtedly been crown'd with wiſh'd-for Succeſs. But as tho' the mighty Secret was too big to be long confin'd within ſo narrow a Compaſs, and, like a boiſterous Vapour ſhut up within a cloud, ſtrugled and was reſtleſs, till it tore its way through; of their own accord, when no Man either deſir'd, or compell'd them, they diſcloſed their own Wickedneſs; for by a Letter from one of them to the Lord *Mounteagle* (which yet was wrapt up in Terms as dark and enigmatical as the *Egyptian* Hieroglyphicks (was the whole Matter moſt happily

diſcovered, and this horrid Deſign, which had long been contriving, and was now juſt brought to a head, in a moment moſt miraculouſly blaſted and confounded.

Thus did He alone, who ſtilleth the raging of the Sea, curbing the Inſolence of its proud Waves only with Reins of ſand ſtem likewiſe the impetuous Torrent of our Enemies Fury, and ſet it its Bounds, which it could not paſs. Thus did He (I ſay) alone, who ſilenceth the raging Tempeſt, and commands the fighting Winds to leave off their Contentions, ſnatching the Mariner, when at his Wits end, from the devouring Jaws of the Deep, by the ſame Almighty *Fiat* ſtill the ſtorm that was about us; after all its Rage and Fury, gently waſting us to the Haven where we would be. Tho' we walk'd on ſtill in Darkneſs, 'till the Foundations of the earth were almoſt out of courſe, yet Hell was naked before Him, and Deſtruction had no Covering. Theſe black, obſcure Chambers of Death were as clear to him as the Light; and theſe gloomy Regions of inextinguiſhable Malice as bright as the Noon-day. He therefore laught at their Attempts, derided their Counſels, and only therefore ſuffered them to bring us into the utmoſt Extremity, that when he

he ſhould in due time deliver us, and we ſhould ſafely look back upon the Danger we had eſcap'd, we might not poſſibly communicate the Glory of our Preſervation to any thing upon Earth, but be forc'd to attribute it wholly and entirely to His Goodneſs who alone giveth Salvation unto Kings, and delivereth his Servants from the hurtful Sword.

And thus does it appear, both from the black and diſmal Nature of the Deſign, which was this Day fram'd againſt us, and alſo from the Strangeneſs and Unexpectedneſs of our Deliverance from that Deſign, that 'twas the Lord himſelf who was on our ſide when Men roſe up againſt us, and that we were delivered from theſe Dangerous Waters, as God ſpeaks to *Zerubbabel*, not by Might, nor by Power, but by his Spirit alone, which mov'd upon the Face of them, and that therefore upon all Accounts we may ſay, This eſpecially is the Day which the Lord hath made, and conſequently that we ought to rejoyce and to be glad in it. And ſo I come to the duty contain'd in my Text, *viz.* the Obligation incumbent upon us of rejoycing, and praiſing God for the Deliverances he vouchſafes us, imply'd in theſe latter Words: *We will rejoyce and be glad in it.* Zechar. 4. 6.

Now I ſhall not encroach ſo much upon your Patience, as ſuperflouſly to enlarge upon the Obligation of this Duty, which I rejoyce to find already acknowledg'd. But ſince your Chearfulneſs and Alacrity in its Performance has left me nothing elſe to do, than to encourage and applaud you in ſo good a Work, I ſhall only crave leave to propoſe two or three things to your conſiderations, whereby, I humbly conceive, you may moſt properly diſcharge it.

1. Then. We cannot better expreſs our Joy and Gratitude to God for the tranſcendent Mercy of this Day, than by declaring our deteſtation and Abhorrence of that Doctrine, which as tho' its Foundations were laid upon the Traditions of Devils rather than of Men, countenanceth, nay, encourageth Men in ſuch black, Antichriſtian undertakings. Of that Doctrine, I ſay, which, under the venerable and ſacred Veil of the beſt Religion in the World, authoriſeth its Profeſſors to perpetrate ſuch Villanies, as the Pagans themſelves would bluſh to have committed. Many indeed are the Outrages and Barbarities committed by the Janizaries, and 'tis as ordinary for them amongſt the *Turks*, as 'twas of old for their Fellow-Prætorian bands amongſt the *Romans*,

Romans, to deprive their Emperour of his Crown first, and then of his Life. But not to say, that these are only single Persons, or at farthest but particular Orders of Men; the things they commit will admit of Excuse and Extenuation. They never pretend to do them upon the account of Religion, but purely for Politick Ends and the Good of the State. Their Lawrels fade and wither under the malignant Influence of the present Governour, whose Fortune (like a direful Comet) threatens Subversion to the Empire, wherefore in the Tempest of their Souls they set up another in his place, whose happier Conduct, they hope, will repair the Ruines they have suffered and settle the Greatness and Grandeur of the state upon a sure, lasting, and immoveable Basis. But now for a whole Sect of Men to be so biggotted and infatuated, as to be even oblig'd by the Principles of their Religion to dye their hands in the Blood of their Brethren; for Men of Reason, Learning, and Conscience, to make it their Business to throw Kingdoms off their Hinges, and to tumble them into a state of Anarchy and confusion: For Christians even in cold blood to stab the sacred Persons of Princes, and piously to Triumph in the Ruines of States and Nati-

ons. This when done, (and This, you know, the *Papists* have often done) is enough to make the Sun once more to draw in his Beams, and the Angels to veil their Faces in Abhorrence and Detestation.

I know there are some, who have the Confidence to tell us, that this is not the Doctrine of the Catholick Church, but the Presumptions only of some private Persons. But not to reply, that 'tis at least the Tenet of the Jesuits, and the concurrent Doctrine of all their Casuists; These objectors would do well to let us know, what one solemn Declaration that Church ever made against it. Alas! It was always so far from being discountenanc'd or exploded either by their Holy Father himself or any General Council, that for six hundred Years at least it has been, as it were the discriminating Mark of that communion from all others. It hath been adopted into their Laws both Ecclesiastical and Civil; and highly approv'd and abetted by the Supreme Authority and Infallible Judgment of their Popes and Councils. Else how came it to pass, that two of the Jesuits, which were conscious of this Plot, upon their Arrival were made, one the Pope's Penitentiary, the other a Confessor in St. *Peter's* at *Rome*? that *Garnet's* Name as

as * *Widdrington* witneſſeth, was inſerted into the Engliſh Martyrology; and tho' he confeſs'd himſelf, that he died for Treaſon, and dehorted all others of his Perſwaſion from ſuch pernicious Practices, yet that his Bones were kept for Reliques, and his Image ſet over Altars, as that of a holy Martyr? In ſhort, 'Tis plain, that 'tis not ſpurious, but truly genuine, ſince it has been abundantly confirm'd by the general Practice of that Church, there being ſcarce any Kingdom, or People, or Nation, where ſhe has unhappily landed, but what bears the moſt ample and indelible Characters of this Fundamental Article. Witneſs the woful and lamentable Stories of the *Roman* Inquiſition in *Spain*, and that bruiſh Slaughter of the innocent *Waldenſes* in *France*, when (as 'tis prov'd by our very Learned and Pious † *Uſher* from their own Authors) they were, upon no other account whatever, but purely for the ſake of their Religion, butcher'd by theſe Blood-hounds in the ſpace of 36 Years to the Number of One hundred and four Thouſand ſeven hundred fourty and Seven. Witneſs the frequent Attempts upon our Soveraign of Bleſſed Memory, Queen *Elizabeth*, after *Pius* the Fifth had inſolently thundred out his *Anathema's* againſt her, and by a Bull fix'd

* Appen. p. 150.

† *De Stat. & Succeſs. Eccleſ. cap.* 10.

fix'd up by some Priests in *London* pretended to absolve all her Subjects from their Fealty and Allegiance. Witness that Unfortunate Prince, *Henry* III. of *France*, who within the Compass of this last Century, was stabb'd by one of his own Subjects, *James Clement* a Monk, only for favouring the Protestant Religion. Which, tho' an Execrable, Villainous, and Diabolical Act, was so far from being censur'd or condemn'd by *Sixtus Quintus* then Pope, that his Holiness both approv'd, and also highly extoll'd it in a long Consistory Oration, calling it an excellent, glorious and memorable exploit, not atchiev'd without the special Providence and Appointment of the Great and Good God, and the Suggestion and Assistance of his most Holy Spirit. Witness that grievous Massacre, which in our own memory, the *Huguenots* suffered in *France*, which, tho' equalling at least the heat of any of the ten famous Persecutions by the Heathen Emperors, was yet applauded by *Innocent* the Eleventh as a thing pleasing unto God, a Sacrifice of sweet savour, which would advance that bloody Tyrant to a very eminent Station in the Regions of Immortality. 'Twould be endless to run through all the Butcheries they have committed. No De-

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ſign ſo horrible and bloody, no Attempt ſo miſchievous and treacherous, no Enterprize ſo baſe and cruel, but what you may find committed by them under the ſacred Name of Religion and Conſcience. For Witneſs, laſtly, the black, unparallell'd Undertaking of this Day, when againſt all the Laws of God and Man, of Juſtice and Gratitude, of Humanity and Reaſon, one of the beſt of Kings and moſt Indulgent of Princes, was with the Queen and Prince at one Thunder Clap to have been ſent to Heaven.

One might reaſonable expect to hear of ſome unuſual Provocation, that rais'd theſe Mens Spirits to ſuch an incredible height of Immanity. But, alas! the moſt enraged of them never ſeriouſly alledg'd any; and if they had, the very Stones in the Wall would have found a Voice to have condemn'd them. For if Mercy and Goodneſs if Kindneſs and Benevolence, if Paternal Care and Royal Indulgence, have any Charms or Endearments, they all concentred in that Excellent Prince they thought to have deſtroy'd. Paſt Experience had richly demonſtrated, how impatiently theſe Blood-hounds chirſted after Royal Blood; yet ſo gloriouſly did his Mercy triumph over his other Virtues, that he not only wink'd at their Miſdeeds, but gave them

likewiſe

likewise free Access to his Person, honoured some of them with particular Dignities, and (as he declares * himself) so animated and encouraged them by his as much unexpected as undeserved Favours, that they did directly expect, and assuredly promise themselves Liberty of Conscience, and Equality with his other Subjects in all things. And yet (as tho' we must first cease to be Men, before we can commence *Papists*; and renounce both our Reason and Conscience, to become servants to his Holiness) tho' under the benign Influence of his so happy Reign they bask'd themselves in the pleasant Rivers of overflowing Felicity; tho' (I say) they sat under his Shadow with great Delight, whilst his Banner over them was Love, the poysonous Seeds of that pestilential Heresie, had (as appears from their own Confessions) so infected, or rather quite choak'd the good Seed of Nature, that (notwithstanding all the Obligations that Heaven and Earth could lay upon them) Hell got the upper hand, and they thirsted after his Blood. Good God! That Men, who professe themselves the Disciples of a poor, despis'd and crucifi'd Saviour, whose Life, tho' he had all the heavenly Host at his Command, was one continued Lecture of Humility,

* Pag. 253.

Humility, Meekneſs, and Self-denial, and whoſe whole Doctrine reſolvable into this one Precept, *Love one another*, ſhould be ſo far from following his Example in ſaving Mens Lives, and doing all the Good they can, that they go about with his Profeſs'd Adverſary, ſeeking whom they may devour. That the Profeſſors of that Religion, which is made up of Purity, Piety, Peace and Holineſs, ſhould delight in cruel Treacheries, bloody Maſſacres, and tragical Murthers, nay think by ſo doing λατρειαν προσφέρειν θεῷ, as our * Saviour ſpeaks, even to offer a Sacrifice to God, as tho' he would be pleas'd with that ſort of Worſhip which the moſt barbarous and brutiſh part of Mankind us'd to give to the Devil. Does it not ſeize you with Amazement, to think that the Servants of the Prince of Peace ſhould delight above all others to imbrue their hands in Blood, and that the Followers of the meek Lamb of God ſhould degenerate into ravenous Wolves and Tygers! That the Vicar of Chriſt, who expreſly declares that his Kingdom is not of this World, ſhould magiſterioufly take upon him to diſpoſe of Crowns and Scepters, and inſolently to trample upon the Necks of Kings and Emperours? Certainly, if theſe things are indeed conſonant to the Princi-

* Joh. 16. 2.

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ples of Christianity, I know no Reason that great Statist *Machiavel* had to complain that it rendered Men unfit for cruel Undertakings; or why those Heathen Emperours, which Persecuted it most, should not be canoniz'd for Saints, since they undoubtedly did the Office of good Patriots in endeavouring to rid the World of such Men who made it their business to turn it upside down. But, *Quid Christiani læserant Regna terrena?* How the Christians had caus'd any Molestation or Damage to the Kingdoms of the Earth, was justly demanded by St. *Austin.* For tho' from their frequent Discourses of that Kingdom which they expected hereafter, their Enemies erroneously suspected them to be disaffected to the Government, 'tis abundantly evident both from their Writings and Practice, that they were *Cæsar*'s best Friends. They did not indeed with his other subjects exalt him above the Level of despis'd Mortality, and therefore they neither gave him Sacrifice, nor swore by his Genius but (what really became good and pious Men) they fought his Battels, honour'd his Person, rever'd his Power, paid his Tribute, offer'd up Prayers for him, and obey'd his Laws, unless where they evidently contradicted the Laws of Christ

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and where they did, submitted to the most cruel Penalties they laid upon them, with the greatest Calmness and Serenity of Soul. And where, notwithstanding all this, they were accus'd (as indeed they often were) as Enemies to *Cæsar*, they thought it highly concern'd them for the Honour of their Religion, by all means possible to wipe off these Stains, which were falsly laid upon them; and accordingly we find them in their Apologies and other Writings with all the Zeal imaginable vindicating themselves from such malicious Aspersions. παρακαλοῦμεν τὸν θεὸν, * says St. *Cyril*, ὑπὲρ κοινῆς τῆς εἰρήνης, ὑπὲρ τῆς κόσμου εὐσταθείας, ὑπὲρ βασιλέων, ὑπὲρ στρατιωτῶν, καὶ συμμάχων. We beseech God for the common Peace of the Churches, for the Quiet of the World, for our Kings, their Souldiers, and Auxiliaries. And † Tertullian, *Precantes sumus Omnes semper pro omnibus imperatoribus*, and so on, *i.e.* We all do continually pray, that God would give our Emperours a long Life, a secure Empire, a safe House valiant Armies, a faithful Senate, a good People, a peaceable World, & *quæcunq; Hominis & Cæsaris Vota sunt*, and whatsoever *Cæsar* either as a Man or Emperour, can wish. 'Tis manifest then, that these

* Cat. 16.

† Ap. c. 30.

Primitive

Primitive Christians never thought it their Duty to assassinate Princes, tho' Pagan or Heretical, for the Cause of Religion, or to excite their Subjects to Rebellion for the Interest of the Gospel. They did not illuminate Mens Understandings with Fire and Faggots, nor convince or silence Gainsayers by the uncontroulable Arguments of Apostolical Dragooners. As their Battels were Spiritual, so neither were their Weapons Carnal. 'Twas the peculiar Honour of their Profession, that it grew victorious by Sufferings, and triumph'd in Persecutions: That Tears were its Jewels, and its Chains its chiefest Ornaments: That whereas all other Religions, in the World did by a multitude of Sacrifices as it were, train up and inure Mens Minds to Blood and Destruction it was always (like its great Author) upon the Passive; not by Swords and Daggers, by Fire and Faggots, by Plots and Caballs, but by enduring all things, by bearing all things, recommending it self to the World. Now then, is the Church of *Rome* this meek and gentle spouse of Christ, which is therefore comely as the Curtains of *Solomon*, because black through the Heat of Persecutions? Is she, I say, that Church whose Foundations are laid on the Blood, not of her Enemies, but dearest Friends? How-

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ever *Bellarmine* might pride himself in his Notes of the true Church, yet surely her red and bloody Garments speak her to be either that Beast in the *Apocalypse*, that kills all those that will not receive his Mark in their Foreheads, nor worship his Image; or that great *Babylon*, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth, which St. *John* saw drunken with the Blood of the Saints, and with the Blood of the Martyrs of *Jesus*. O my Soul then, come not thou into her secret, and unto her Assemblies mine Honour be not thou united.

2. We cannot better express our Joy and Gratitude to God for the transcendant Mercy of this Day, than by letting it remind us of his infinite Goodness in calling us from the Tents of these wicked Men, who by teaching and maintaining such pernicious Doctrines, do not only (as you have already seen) carry Men on to the most heinous Immoralities, but also as a natural Consequence from such Premises, wholly and entirely pervert the Simplicity of the Gospel of Christ. To some unthinking Persons perhaps this may seem a bold Charge; yet I need not be long in the Proof of it. For not to tell you,

that these Men have set up such a number of Intercessors, that as the Prophet *Jeremy* speaks, according to the number of their Cities, so are their Gods; tho' the * Apostle (for his Argument is levell'd against the Heathens, who never so much as heard of a Mediator of Redemption, and therefore did only acknowledge those of Intercession) expressly declares, that there is but One. Not (I say) to remind you, that tho' our Saviour in his Farewell-speech most passionately bequeaths to us mutual Love and Kindness, and the more to endear this Duty to us, adds withal, that this should be so evident a Mark of our Profession, that hereby should all Men know, that we are indeed his Disciples; yet † These Men teach, that if we will be Christians indeed, we must rifle and plunder one another, kill and stab our Brethren, butcher our Benefactors, blow up Parliaments, and destroy Heretical Kings and States; for this is not only lawful, but also laudable, excellent, heroick, and meritorious. Lastly, not to say that they forbid their Priests to Marry, and condemn that Sacred Institution in such Persons as impious, and damnable; tho' ‖ St. *Paul* assures us, that

* 1 Tim. 2. 5.

† *Vid. Concil. Lateran. 4 Can. 3. de Hæret.*

‖ Heb. 13. 4.

than 'tis equally honourable in all sorts of Meats; may * reckon the Prohibition of it amongst the Doctrines of Devils, and the Primitive Church never thought the worse of her Bishops for it? What else speak their taking the Cup from the Laity? tho' according to the positive command of Christ, that they should all Drink of it, the Primitive Church (as they themselves confess) allow'd it them; and rather than not worship an Idol or Image, their abolishing (as much as they can) the Commandment that forbids it? What mean their Indulgences, their Fairs and Sales of Masses, and frequent Prayers for the dead? by all which they have inverted the Assertion of our blessed Saviour, rendering it almost impossible for a Poor Man to be Sav'd or for a Rich Man to be Damn'd. Why have they interdicted the Use of the Scriptures to the People, when the † Apostle assures us, that they are so far from doing them harm, as they pretend, that they are able to make them wise to Salvation? and the || *Psalmist*, in an Ecstasie, pronounceth the Blessedness of that Man unspeakably great, whose Delight is in the law of the Lord, and who therefore with unwearied

* 1 Tim. 4. 1, 3.

† 2 Tim. 3. 15.

|| Psal. 1. 1, 2.

Study meditates continually therein both Day and Night? Nay when * Christ himself expresly Commands them to read them diligently, and attributes the pernicious Errors of the *Sadducees* to their Ignorance of them? Are these things indeed with their other repudiated Doctrines, built upon the Foundations of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the Head-corner-stone? Alas! If you look narrowly into them, you will discern their Nature to be aliene and extraneous, some of them being borrowed purely from the Heathens, others from the Pest of the Primitive Church, the *Gnosticks*, and most of them (as they themselves acknowledge) from Oral Tradition, there being not one Word to countenance them in all the Scriptures. But is not this to invert the Religion of Christ, and entirely to overthrow the fundamental and substantial Principles of our Profession? Is not this, with the *Pharisees*, to make the Word of God of none effect by humane Traditions, or rather to preach another Gospel than what we have receiv'd from Christ and his Apostles the which tho' an Angel from Heaven should do, the † Holy Ghost has long since

* Joh. 5. 39. *and* Mat. 22. 29

† Gal. 1. 8, 9.

since pronounc'd him accurs'd? How they are like to escape this Imputation at God's Tribunal, they would do well to consider; I wish it could never be laid to their charge. To return then to ourselves: What infinite Reason have we to bless God; who has graciously purg'd out this old Leaven from amongst us, and made us a new Lump unto himself? Who, by the glorious Instruments of our Reformation, has brought us out of the darkness of Errour and Innovation into the true and genuine Light of the Gospel; and for those Leeks and Garlick our Souls so much abhorr'd, feeds us with heavenly Manna to the full? Certainly, if Heaps of Mercies both Spiritual and Temporal; If the free Possession of your Estates, and the Happiness of being Members of the most uncorrupted Church in the World, are things that can in reason pretend to our Gratitude, we, of all Men in the World, are the most indebted. O then, let us never, with the ungrateful *Israelites*, hanker again after these loathsome Flesh-pots; nor when we have eaten and drank to the full, rise up to play with this Harlot any more. She will often, no doubt, be tempting and ensnaring you, and by her

her Paints and Colours, gaudy Shows, and Pompous Pageantry, endeavours to entice you again into her Embraces. But remember, 'tis only a treacherous *Syren's* Voice, which only therefore courts you, that she may make you her Prey. She seeks not you but yours, and how Zealous soever she may seem for your Welfare, the Term of her desire is only her own. She knows the Fruitfulness of your Land, the Liberality of your Soil, and the Pleasantness of your Dwellings. She remembers, how she once rang'd without Controul over all your pleasant Pastures, and chose out the fattest of your Lands, for her to sport and play in; and therefore, since for the foul Apostasie she made from her Primitive Innocence, the flaming Sword and the Guardian Spirits deter her from re-entring this Paradise, 'tis no Wonder if, the better to deceive us, she transform her self for a time into an Angel of Light. But I trust the wakeful eye of Providence will still discover her Treacheries, and not suffer us any more to be enamour'd by her Smiles. And then for her Frowns, we are sure they cannot hurt us. Those Curses she so liberally throws against us, will

will (I doubt not) take wing and fly [illegible] upon her foes and all those Bulls and Interdicts, Anathemas & Curses, and Excommunications which yearly in Holy Week, the better to prepare her self for the Celebration of the Lords Supper, she charitably denounceth against us, either prove *Brutta fulmina*, Thunderclaps, which indeed make a Noise, but want a killing Bolt, or by woful Retorts turn the direful Execution upon her own Head. In a word, If we take care to walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith we are call'd, and not dishonour Reform'd Religion by the Deformity of our Lives, maugre all the Malice of Earth and Hell, of Men and Devils, we shall undoubtedly be sav'd. Damnation will not be inflicted according to mens Professions and Understandings, neither will the grim Faces, and dreadful Menaces of *Romish* Emissaries exclude us from the Favour and Blessing of Heaven. Tho' they reject us, Christ will embrace us; Tho' they turn us out of their Synagogues, God will receive us under his Wings; and provided we forfeit not his Protection by our Misdemeanours, the Angel of his Presence will undoubtedly

ly continue to live us, till Time it self shall be no more. Wherefore, that we may not peculiarly incur this Judgment by our Ingratitude, but duly express our Joy and Thankfulness to God for this transcendent Mercy of this Day, let us

3. Take Care both to continue our selves, and also to bequeath to our Posterity a grateful Remembrance of it. How near was the Daughter of Zion to be covered with a Cloud; and to be trampled under foot by her treacherous Enemies? The Net (you have heard) was cast about her, and the Fowlers even hasting to the Slaughter. The Train was laid, all the Instruments of death prepar'd, and there remain'd nothing to make us an Holocaust to the Roman *Moloch*, but just putting the lighted Match to the Powder. And yet, methinks, I hear the Church, full of Faith, saying; Tho' no Danger was ever like to my Danger, yet I charge You, O ye Daughters of *Jerusalem*, by the Roes and by the Hinds of the Field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my Love, till he please. For how forlorn and destitute soever I may seem to some, yet I am my Be-

loved's

loved's, and my Beloved is mine, tho' therefore he tarries, he will not be long, but will in due time look forth as the Morning, fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun, and terrible as an Army with Banners. And indeed her Beloved came, when she expected him not; He was found of her, when she sought not after him. He awaked as one out of Sleep, and look'd and saw there was none to help, and wondred that there was none to uphold. Therefore his own Arm brought Salvation to her, and his infinite Goodness alone upheld her. May then that God, who has thus wonderfully wrought for us in snatching us from the Mouth of the Lion, and the Paw of the Bear, be ever blessed; and the Remembrance of this unspeakable Mercy never [illegible] so long [illegible] shall endure. May those glorious Spirits, which before pity'd our Danger, and now rejoyce at our Deliverance, never be frustrated in their Expectations, but do all our Members and Faculties, our Life and Lives, Hearts and Voices, harmoniously singing the Triumphs of the Lord, and in the continual Order, Concord, and Congruity, declaring the infinite Goodness

Goodness of our God; that so our Candlestick may never be remov'd for our Ingratitude, but, tho' Darkness cover the Earth, and gross Darkness the People, This Church may still be a Crown of Glory in the Hand of the Lord and a Royal Diadem in the Hand of her God, that the *Gentiles* may admire her Beauty, and the Sons also of them that afflicted her, come bending unto her: and all they that despis'd her bow themselves down at the Soles of her Feet: and all the Nations round about call her the City of the Lord, the *Zion* of the Holy one of *Israel*. Lastly, May she be covered with the Robes of Righteousness, and continually cloath'd with the Garments of Salvation, 'till the Great Year of Jubilee, the time of her final Redemption shall come, when God shall put an End to all Prejudices and Animosities, all Struglings and contentions, and all the Elect with Crowns on their Heads, and Palms in their hands shall make one perfect Harmony in singing the eternal Praise of God and of the Lamb.

Which

Which blessed time, God in his Mercy hasten, through Jesus Christ our Lord; To whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, Three Persons and One God, be ascribed, as is most due, All Honour, Glory, Power, Might, Majesty, Dominion, and Thanksgiving, from this time forth and for evermore.

Amen.

FINIS

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